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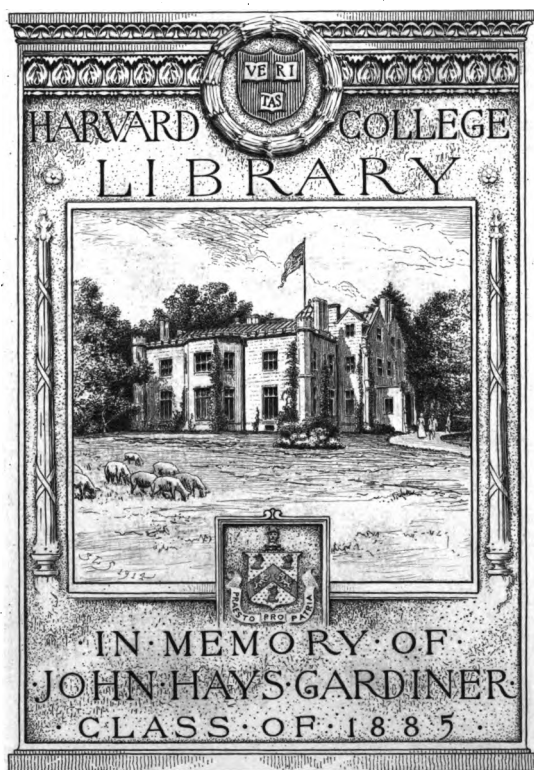
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By Wm. H. Miller

A
POLITICAL HISTORY

OF THE
EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS
WHICH LED TO
THE BURMESE WAR;

ILLUSTRATED WITH
A MAP OF THE BRITISH FRONTIER,
BY
CAPTAIN W. WHITE.

DEDICATED TO
His Most Excellent Majesty
GEORGE THE FOURTH.

London:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
AND PUBLISHED BY W. SAMS, ST. JAMES'S STREET,
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Gift of
J. H. Gardner

Byrd & W. K. M. G. A.

TO

HIS MOST EXCELLENT AND GRACIOUS MAJESTY

GEORGE THE FOURTH.

SIRE,

THE blessings which your paternal government has procured to the nation are so many, that future historians alone will be able to appreciate them all. Indeed the facts of your having extended the power and reputation of your empire without neglecting the comforts of your subjects—the establishment of so many schools by which the light of knowledge is no longer withheld from the humble and the poor—the enlarged views that have been taken of commerce, &c. &c. would alone stamp the reign of your Majesty as the most fortunate epoch in the annals of Great Britain. But your Majesty has done more—you have extended to other nations the benefits which the subjects of

DEDICATION.

these realms derive from that state of independence and liberty—that freedom of thought and action—that protection and justice, which, possibly, is not enjoyed by the subjects of any other Monarch on the face of the earth.—Without your interference Europe and the world would still groan under the despotic sway of France—without your interference the Sovereigns of Europe would still have crouched before the despotism of *the French Ruler*.

Animated by these considerations, I have ventured to dedicate to your Majesty the following Work—in which I have endeavoured to expose the origin of the evils which do, and will press over a large portion of your subjects in India, unless your Majesty deigns to stretch your benevolent hand to redress their wrongs and better their condition. The greatest part of the events I have stated, have been witnessed by me—the others I have derived from incontrovertable authorities—and to ascertain the truth of the whole is a deed worthy of your powerful and benevolent hand. Would to God that in India they might share with your subjects at home the same blessings, the same comforts, the same security—would to

DEDICATION.

God that instead of being ruled by a set of men whose ideas of commerce renders them unfit to nourish or even to grasp at the enlarged and elevated views of a statesman, they should be governed by ministers chosen and appointed by your Majesty—accountable to your Majesty alone for their conduct, and receiving from your Majesty's Cabinet their necessary instructions to ensure the happiness and prosperity of the *hundred millions* of your subjects, who now feel no other advantage than the mere name of belonging to your Empire. You would find them, Sire, as brave and as loyal as any other portion of your subjects—and the gratitude they would feel for the happiness which you alone can procure to them—would become another source of satisfaction to your Majesty and of happiness to your people.

Such, Sire, are the aspirations of one of your Majesty's

Most devoted,

Most attached,

And most loyal Subjects,

London,

Jan. 1, 1827.

W. WHITE.

P R E F A C E.

THE happy termination of the late disastrous contest with the Burmese Power, although a subject for general congratulation, by no means should be permitted to draw the attention of the public and British legislature from the question of the causes which led to, and the propriety of the commencement of the War. The conclusion by no means supercedes the necessity of a rigid enquiry into the circumstances which led to the sacrifice of so much human life, the desolation of province after province, with all the attendant evils, and the expenditure of twelve millions of pounds sterling. It must be admitted that it is a subject that demands very grave and serious consideration. No success which the British arms may have acquired can render it a less important duty which the British nation owe to themselves, as well as mankind at large, to show that the war in its origin was just, and in its commencement proper. Much doubt has existed on these points: it is high time it was removed.

The impression which has endeavoured to be fixed on the minds of the public has been, that the Burmese were

PREFACE.

the *sole* aggressors—that the Government of India having long born insult and aggression without retaliation, and with great forbearance, were at length compelled to resort to arms in support or vindication of the honour of the British character—to repel invasion, to seek redress for past injuries, to obtain security for the future, and to establish a peace on a solid and permanent basis.

Such are the motives which have been stated by authority. But in the statements, both of a public and private nature, which have gone before the world, much has been said that ought to have been avoided; and much has been omitted which, for candour and justice sake, ought to have been told.

In the absence of a faithful narrative of the events which led to the war, the Author has been induced to venture upon the publication of the following Work; the facts being chiefly collected from the records of the Indian Government as presented to Parliament.

The Author from his early pursuits in the military profession, has had but little opportunity for literary pursuits—or the improvement of an education he was taken from while very young. This may be received by some as an excuse, and induce them to make allowances for the many inaccuracies and deficiencies which no doubt will be discovered.

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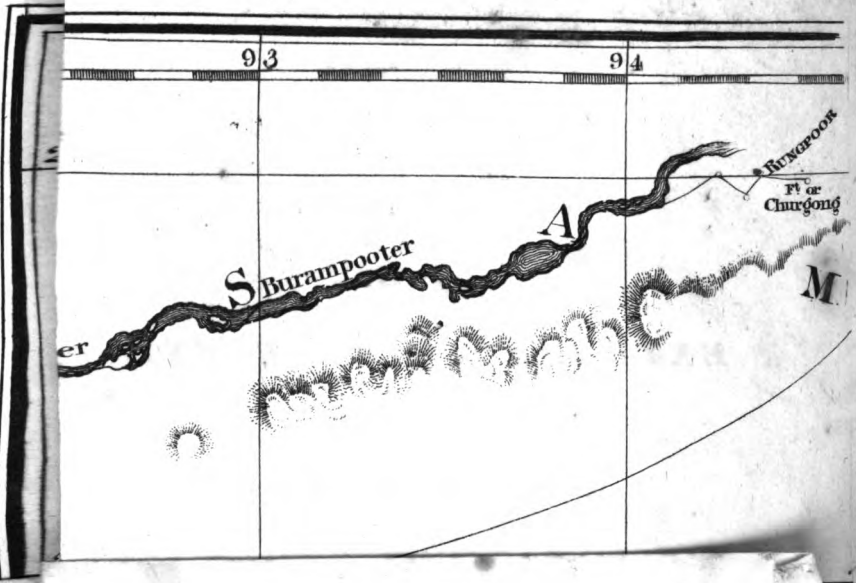
First intercourse between the English and Burmese---Establishment of a British Factory in the Burman Dominions---The destruction of the Factory, putting to death of the principal Europeans belonging to it, and the expulsion of all others from the Burman Territories in consequence of their treachery---Conquest of Arracan by the Burmese, dreadful massacre of the inhabitants, and the flight of others into the Company's Province of Chittagong for protection---The Arracanese refugees form themselves into gangs of robbers, carry on unceasing hostilities against the Burmese, and plunder fleets laden with the Royal Customs of Arracan; spoil transported into the Company's province---Advance of a Burmese Army into the province of Chittagong demanding the leaders of the banditti; their surrender by the British Government, and execution by the Burmese---Fresh emigration of forty thousand Arracanese into the Chittagong district; the Burmese forces advance into the province and demand their expulsion---Engagement between the British and Burmese Troops, and the defeat of the former---Arrival of the first Burmese Ambassador at Calcutta---Mission of Colonel Symes to Ava---Plunder of the Town of Chittagong by the Arracanese refugees of 17 pieces of Cannon---Invasion of Arracan by thirty thousand Arracanese refugees from the Company's province---Advance of the British Troops to the frontier, their sufferings---Conquest of Arracan by the refugees; the siege and surrender of the capital, dreadful massacre of the population, and horrid conduct of the conquerors---Destruction of thirty thousand of the Inhabitants---Despatch of a British Envoy to Rangoon; and pledge of the honour of the British Government---Re-conquest of Arracan by the Burmese; the massacre, and flight of the re-

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POLITICAL HISTORY
OF THE
EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS
WHICH LED TO THE
BURMESE WAR.

To enable the reader to comprehend the conduct of the Indian Government towards the Burmese up to the period of the commencement of the war, it will be requisite, before the records of the former government are examined, to give a short detail of the intercourse which had previously existed between the British and Burmese powers, and the events which at different periods have occurred to form grounds of dispute, tended to excite the animosity, suspicion, or jealousy of either.

Early in the seventeenth century both the English and Dutch had obtained settlements in various parts of the Burman dominions; but owing chiefly to the misconduct of the latter, all Europeans were banished from Ava. Many years

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afterwards the English were reinstated in their factories at Ava and Syriam, and they also took possession of the Island of Negrais. During the civil war that followed the revolt of the Peguans against the Burmese, in 1740, the British factory at Syriam was destroyed in the contest, and all commerce for several years suspended. In 1750, the English and French had re-established their factories in Syriam ; and each took a part in the contest still raging between the Peguans and Burmese. In 1754, the Burmese having completely vanquished the Peguans, the Burmese conqueror, Alam-praw, exasperated at the duplicity displayed in turn by the principal persons of both the English and French factories, who had always been desirous of only assisting the strongest party, thereby betraying both, took the sanguinary revenge of putting to death the principal Europeans of both sides, and destroying the factories. In 1760, Alam-praw died, and was succeeded in the government by his son, Neemdagee-praw. During Neemdagee-praw's reign, it was resolved by the tacit agreement of both parties, to bury in oblivion the circumstances connected with the expulsion of the English from their factory at Negrais, and to grant them as much ground as they could occupy at Perseram. But, notwithstanding this, the impression of ill faith on the part of the European factories long survived the reign of Alam-praw, and took deep root in the

mind of the Burmese; and which, it is to be lamented, subsequent events were little calculated to remove.

On the death of Neemdagee in 1782, Minderagee-praw became the Burman Monarch. He commenced his reign by the successful invasion of the province of Arracan, in 1783, a state of the greatest natural strength, and adjoining the East India Company's province of Chittagong. "Arracan stretches from the river Nauf, which separates it from the district of Chittagong, as far southward as Cape Negrais. The great range of western mountains called Anou-pactou-miou, nearly encircles it. From Bassien, or Cape Negrais, its southern frontier can be invaded only by water. On the north it is accessible from the Chittagong frontier *only by the sea beach*, which is continually intersected by channels from the sea; and the *mountaneous passes* of the Anou-pactou-miou Ghauts are *so difficult*, that an enterprising people might with *a small force defend them against any numbers*.—Although the great river in which the city of Arracan stands, expands into a noble sheet of water, yet its entrance is well protected by lands and numerous islands. A strong fleet of boats however descended the Irrawaddy, entered the waters of Arracan by the creeks and channels of the Bassien river, and a naval action took place about two miles from the fort, which terminated in favour of the Burmans. The

approach of a powerful army under the Prince of Prome, who had penetrated the mountain defiles, compleated the victory. Maha Sumda, the Rajah of Arracan, terrified at the bold and warlike character of his foes, sought safety in flight, but was overtaken, and conveyed with all his family to Amarapoora, where he died in the first year of his captivity. The town and fort of Arracan fell after a faint resistance. Many of the Mughs, or natives of Arracan, preferring flight to servitude, took refuge in the Dumbuck Hills, on the borders of the Chittagong district, and amid the forlorn wastes and jungles skirting the frontiers ; where having formed themselves into independent tribes of robbers, they have carried on unceasing hostilities against the Burmans. Some settled in the district of Dacca and Chittagong, under the protection of the British flag ; while others, rather than abandon their country, submitted to the conquerors." *

With the sanction and approbation of the British Government, many thousand of the Mugh emigrants were allowed to colonize in the lower part of the province of Chittagong, and within constant sight of Arracan. The tidings of the happy and flourishing condition of the emigrants, soon reached the remotest parts of the province of Arracan ; the consequences were,

* Modern Traveller, part xxv.

that, year after year, multitudes of the Mughls flocked to the Company's territory to better their condition ; and the emigration from Arracan was carried to such an extent, as to threaten the total abandonment of that province. *

“ In 1794, an event occurred, which had nearly embroiled the Brimans in hostilities with the British Government. The trade of Arracan had long suffered from the attacks of piratical banditti (the Mughls), and even fleets laden with the royal customs, had been attacked by these freebooters, chiefly refugees from Arracan, who scrupled not to make predatory incursions by land also. Having accomplished their object, they, as the Birmans alledged, transported their spoil across the river Nauf, the boundary of the Chittagong district, and under the protection of the British flag, lived in safety and at ease, until impelled by want to renew their depredations. His Briman Majesty, on becoming acquainted

* “ Arracan in the beginning of the seventeenth century was a powerful Monarchy. The most powerful monarchies of the Indo Chinese countries were Arracan, Ava, Siam, and Pegu. Between Siam and Pegu there was constant struggles, from time immemorial for supremacy, and the cause was the ambition of the King of Pegu to possess himself of the white elephant. Torrents of blood were spilt in the unhappy conquest, and the land covered with ruin and dessolation. Three Kings lost their lives in their struggle for the unhappy beast ; and at last the King of Pegu lost his life in a struggle to retain it ; but it was carried off by the King of Arracan.”—*Modern Traveller*.

with these facts, ordered a body of five thousand troops to march into the district of Chittagong, with positive commands to apprehend and bring back the culprits. The British Government, surprised at the aggression, despatched a strong detachment with artillery to Chittagong, to expel the invaders. Seeree Nundo Kiozo, the Briman General, appears to have conducted himself with singular moderation and discretion. After his army had crossed the river, and encamped on the western bank, he dictated a letter to the British Magistrate of Chittagong, stating that the only object of his inroad was the caption of the delinquents, and disclaiming any design of hostilities against the British; at the same time he declared his resolution not to quit the Company's territory till they were given up, and having fortified his camp with a stockade, he seemed determined to abide by this resolution. On the approach, however, of Major-General Erskine, Seeree Nunda Kiozo sent a flag of truce, proposing terms of accommodation on the same basis; and he afterwards with a manly confidence in the British character, personally waited on General Erskine, who appears to have acted with equal firmness and prudence. It being represented to the Birmanians that no proposals could be listened to while they remained on English ground, they were induced to re-cross the river, having received a promise that the matter of complaint should

instantly be investigated. The refugees were already in custody; and the result was, that three principal delinquents were surrendered to the Burman Chief, who having attained the object of his expedition, retired with his captives from the British frontier." *

The refugees surrendered were notorious criminals; two of whom were immediately put to death by the most cruel torture; but the third contrived to make his escape, and again took refuge in the Company's province.

In consequence of the continued oppression of the Burmese towards the Arracanese, in the years 1797 and 1798, no less than forty thousand more of the population emigrated. When they entered the province of Chittagong the situation of the unfortunate wretches was deplorable in the extreme: numbers perished from want, sickness, and fatigue, while the survivors were constrained to live upon reptiles and leaves, until such time as the British Government humanely relieved their wants by providing them with food and materials for the constructing of huts, to shelter them from the then approaching rains.

The Burmese having collected an army of about four thousand men, followed the emigrants into the province of Chittagong. The commander of the troops addressed a letter to the magistrate

* Modern Traveller.

of Chittagong observing—"If you will keep in your country the slaves of our King, the broad path of intercourse between the two states will be blocked up. Our disagreement is only about these refugees: we wrote to you to deliver them up, and you have been offended thereat. We again write to you who are in the province of Chittagong, on the part of the King of the Company, that we will take away the whole of the Arracanese; and further, in order to take them away more troops are coming. If you will keep the Arracanese in your country, the cord of friendship will be broken."

In reply to this threatening demand, the magistrate of Chittagong required that the Burmese troops should instantly retire from the province, or otherwise their commander must stand the consequence; and the magistrate further informed him that no negotiation would be entered into until such time as they had. The Burmese troops, in the mean time, fortified themselves with stockades in the mountains, and for many weeks carried on a petty warfare with the Company's troops. They successfully repulsed an attack that was made upon their stockades on the 18th of July, 1799; but soon afterwards retired to their own boundary of Arracan. A British officer was then deputed by the Government of Calcutta to the Governor of Arracan, to endeavour to effect an amicable adjustment of differences.

The Government of Calcutta having resolved upon rendering the situation of the new refugees as comfortable as possible, sent an officer, Captain Cox, to the frontier to register the emigrants, and allot them ground for their subsistence. Captain Cox reported the number of them, to be between forty and fifty thousand.

Early in 1800, his Burman majesty sent an ambassador to Bengal for the purpose of making a representation to the supreme government, relative to the serious injury his province of Arracan had sustained by the encouragement which had been given to the Mugh emigrants—and to require the interference of the British Government to induce their return. The Governor-General, Lord Wellesley, endeavoured to satisfy the mind of the ambassador as to the friendly disposition of the British Government towards the Burman Court, and assured the ambassador, that the refugees who might be disposed, were at perfect liberty to return to their native country; but declined a compliance with the requisition of forcing the return of the emigrants. The Governor-General, however, appears at the time to have been so fully impressed with the impropriety, the impolicy, as well as the difficulties to which the Government were likely to be exposed, the consequence of giving such unlimited protection—nay, encouragement to the Arracanese refugees—that too after the enormous abuses

which they had already made of their assylum, as to induce him to issue a proclamation, and which was communicated to the ambassador, declaring that any subjects of the Burmese King who might thereafter emigrate, *should not be received within the British territories.* *

Towards the latter part of the same year,

* Sir John Malcolm in his "Political History of India," adverting to the protection given to the very extensive emigration of 1797, and 1798, says, "policy became enlisted on the side of humanity, that they should at least obtain a temporary asylum." That humanity dictated the necessity will readily be admitted; but what *policy* had to do with it I cannot see. It must indeed be an extraordinary kind of government, whose policy it would be to harbour the greater part of the population of an adjoining friendly province, the chief object of which emigration was that of ruining the country and endeavouring to embroil the protecting government with the one abandoned; and upon which it was known that the emigrants would carry on an unceasing warfare, forming themselves into bands of robbers and live by plunder. It might as well be said--*policy* as well as humanity, dictated the necessity of protecting the Spanish refugees, and that the government should provide them with food while their own population were suffering and thousands obliged to emigrate for the purpose of obtaining the common necessities of life. To admit the principal it were the same as to say, it was policy to afford a temporary asylum to any rascally foreigners who might honour us by taking up their abode with us. But with all due deference to Sir John Malcolm, I should be disposed to differ in opinion with him as much on the policy of harbouring the Mughls, as I am to the situation he has assigned in page 553 of his work, to "*Ramoo, on the banks of the Nauf*," while it happened not to be within eighty miles of that river.

1800, the Governor of Arracan renewed his demands for the unconditional surrender of the Mugh refugees; and in his letter to the Magistrate of Chittagong, conveyed a threat of invasion if his demands were not immediately complied with. The Governor-General doubting that the demand of the Governor of Arracan had been made by the authority of the King of Ava, with a view of ascertaining the fact, and to improve the political and commercial relations between the two states, resolved to dispatch an embassy to the Court of Ava.

The question of the emigrants appears to have lain dormant many years, until 1811, when the British Government again began to experience the evil consequences attending the establishing of the refugees in colonies immediately adjoining the British frontier, and presenting a constant view of their native country, by being involved in fresh disputes with the Burmese regarding the renewal of depredations by the refugees upon the province of Arracan.

At this period I happened to be stationed at Chittagong with the regiment I then belonged to, the 2nd battalion 15th Bengal Native Infantry, and it also so occurred that I was on duty with the detachment which advanced to the Nauf river on the occasion. By these means, I am not only acquainted with most of the transactions of that period, but also with *some facts* that are

not noticed in the “*extracts of despatches*,” from the Government of Bengal to the Court of Directors, relative to the discussions between that government and the Burmese; and which were printed in return to an order of the Honourable the House of Commons of the 30th of May, 1825.

The “*extracts*” commence from the year 1811. To have enabled the public to form a just estimation of the conduct of the two states, there should have been printed the correspondence which took place in years proceeding 1811, regarding the depredations and outrages committed by the Mugh refugees upon the province of Arracan at the periods which induced the Burmese to invade the province of Chittagong.

Before I enter into an examination of the “*Extracts of Despatches*,” which have been published by authority, I shall take leave to remark that although the papers contain much valuable information, they are nevertheless very unsatisfactory and incomplete documents. They are unsatisfactory, because they are *partially selected*, and only in a cursory manner treat upon events of an important and highly interesting nature, and are replete with misrepresentations: incomplete, because they continually refer to documents that are declared to be “*very important*,” but which have nevertheless been withheld. Reports of this sort, however, are best calculated to stifle inquiry,

to gloss over events of a doubtful character, and to conceal from the public view any of those acts of injustice, violence, or oppression, which it is too much to be feared the inhabitants of those ill-fated regions have from time to time, more or less, been subjected to, even up to the present moment. But, happily enough has been given by which the truth, with difficulty, may be got at—to make out a clear case—to prove the mild, forbearing, and friendly disposition of one party, under the most aggravating and serious injuries for many years; and to demonstrate the honor, and sort of justice administered by the other.

The origin of the disputes, and from which may clearly be traced the grounds of ill-will and the cause of engendering a feeling of revenge on the part of the Burmese, which ultimately led to the disastrous war, are thus stated by the Government of Bengal, in their despatch to the Court of Directors, under date the 23rd of January, 1812.

“ In the early part of the past year, 1811, a native of Arracan, named Kingberring, whose ancestor as well as himself possessed lands to a considerable extent in that province, near the frontier of Chittagong, and who in consequence of his having incurred the displeasure (and *been* exposed to) the resentment of the King of Ava, took refuge with a number of his followers in the district of Chittagong, about fourteen years ago, meditated the design of embodying those followers as well as other Mughls, who many years since emigrated from Arracan. This project he

actually carried into execution in the month of May, 1811, having either by persuasion or by intimidation, induced a large body of Mughls to join his standard. Partly owing to the secrecy and caution with which he carried it into effect, and partly to the negligence of the darogas (native magistrates) of the Thannas on the frontier, his proceedings were unknown to the magistrate of Chittagong until he had crossed the Nauf river, which forms the common boundary of the two countries."

From this paragraph it would seem, that the emigrants had for many years been contemplating an invasion of the province of Arracan; but whether the Government of Bengal were or were not acquainted with the fact, until after the act had taken place, does not appear. One thing is evident, the government had already experienced much inquietude from the previous lawless conduct of the Mughls, and they were well aware of the restless disposition of those people. Was it therefore not, a gross dereliction of every moral and political obligation the neglect to occupy the frontier, and establishing a rigid watch over the future conduct of the emigrants, so as to preclude a possibility of even a repetition of such acts as they had previously committed? What sort of a police could there have been established on the frontier? What vigilance must the magistrate have exercised throughout his district? Will it be credited for a moment, that so large a body of troops, variously rated at from ten to twenty thousand, certainly not less than

ten, could with such *secrecy and caution* be got together, as to quit the country without the knowledge of the magistrate? Undoubtedly not. It must have been a work of time, and could not have been *secretly* performed; particularly so scattered as the Mughhs were throughout the province.

The towns inhabited by the Mughhs are situate south east of Chittagong; the principal of which is Hurvung, distant from Chittagong forty miles, and midway to Ramoo. The population of that town in 1811, could not have been less than twenty thousand. Hurvung was the place of residence of Kingberring, and most of the chiefs who accompanied him; a very large portion of his army were drawn from thence. Next in importance is Cox's Bazaar; distant from Chittagong eighty miles. Then Teck Nauf about sixty miles further south, and situate on the borders of the province of Chittagong.

Upon a reference to the map it would appear almost utterly impossible, that so large a body of men as accompanied Kingberring on his expedition could have been collected together without the knowledge of the magistrate. But admitting as a fact that, "*through the negligence of the doragas,*" it did occur, and that the magistrate was not acquainted with the preparations that were in progress "*until after Kingberring had crossed the Nauf,*"—it would be satisfactory to

learn what reports were made by him of transactions that happened at Chittagong under his very nose, were generally spoken of, so much so that no one for a moment doubted the intention of the Mughls to invade Arracan.

The civil surgeon of Chittagong, Dr. Mc. Rae, happened also to be a ship builder carrying on a considerable traffic between that port and Calcutta. Dr. Mc. Rae had in his dockyard several pieces of cannon (sixteen or seventeen,) the whole of which were carried off one night by a party of Mughls, who had come up from Cox's Bazaar with appropriate boats for conveying them away.

At the entrance of the Chittagong river upon a conical hill, called Flag-Staff-Point, there formerly was a battery and guard stationed. The guard, however, had been for many years withdrawn, as also the guns, with the exception of one an old and very heavy piece of ordinance. A few days after the plunder of Dr. Mc. Rae's dockyard a party of Mughls contrived to get this gun down the hill, and would have succeeded in carrying it off but that information of their proceedings reached Chittagong in time to enable the commanding officer to despatch a detachment to rescue and bring it away.

Again, it was currently reported at Chittagong, that the Mughls were contemplating a seizure of the Company's artillery and magazine. From the contiguous situation of the Bazaar to

the magazine, and a small stream connected with the main river, the weak guard on duty—the remote situation of the artillery barracks, still more so the lines of the sepoy battalion,—the enterprise would not have been difficult;—and from the fact that several large Mugh boats were lying in the river and creek, and great numbers of the Mughs about the town of Chittagong, their appearance not being otherwise accounted for, little room was left to doubt their designs. But whether such was their intention or no, the impression was so prevalent that the guard on duty was strongly augmented, deviating from the usual practice of having it composed entirely of natives, a large portion were European artillerymen, and for whose accommodation a tent was obliged to be pitched close to the magazine.

These occurrences took place towards the end of April, or early in May, 1811; they could not have happened *subsequent* to Kingberring having crossed the Nauf and established himself in the province of Arracan.

It is almost impossible but that the magistrate of Chittagong must have heard of these transactions. If he heard of them and failed to report them to the Government of Calcutta, his conduct would appear altogether unaccountable. From the “*Extracts of Despatches*” of the Government of Bengal to the Court of Directors, it would seem that he *had not* reported them; for

if he had, the government would hardly have failed to have animadverted upon such occurrences; and, again, it would have been perfectly inconsistent with their assertion, "*that partly owing to the secrecy and caution he pursued his designs, and the promptitude he carried it into effect, his (Kingberring's) proceedings were unknown to the magistrate of Chittagong until he had crossed the Nauf.*"

In the absence of the magistrate's letters to the government the fact would appear to be, that from *some motive*, no matter what, no notice was taken of the proceedings of Kingberring, or of any other of the Mugh refugees until such time as they had established themselves on the frontier of Arracan, and had sent several large bodies of armed Mugh into the Company's province to compel by force to join his standard those of his countrymen who refused to engage in the enterprise; and the appearance of whom created such a terror in the population south of Chittagong, that the whole were deserting the country, flying to the hills, and even to Chittagong for protection.

The same despatch goes on to state:—

"The magistrate on being apprised of Kingberring's proceedings, employed every practicable endeavour to effect the seizure of his person, but without success. His efforts were likewise directed to prevent the departure of additional parties of Mugh, whom, by his emissaries, Kingberring continued to entice, or compel by menace, to join his standard."

This paragraph virtually contradicts the one previously quoted, wherein it is stated "*the proceedings of Kingberring were unknown to the magistrate of Chittagong until he had crossed the Nauf river, the common boundary of the two states.*" If it be true that the proceedings of Kingberring were unknown until after he had crossed the Nauf and established himself beyond the Company's province, and consequent jurisdiction of the magistrate, how was it possible for the magistrate to make any "*effort to effect the seizure of his person?*" Arracan was a province of the Burman Empire, the magistrate of Chittagong had not an atom of power in it, nor could he attempt to seize upon the person of Kingberring while residing in a foreign state, although it would appear from the despatch that it had. The passage, however, cannot apply as it is written, to the conduct of the magistrate *after* Kingberring had crossed the Nauf, and must advert to previous transactions that are not noticed in the "*Extracts of Despatches.*" That the magistrate was apprised of the proceedings of Kingberring *previous* to his having crossed the Nauf there is no doubt, for the government after stating that the magistrate had used "*every practicable endeavour to effect the seizure of his person,*" go on to state:—"Kingberring, however, succeeded in collecting a considerable body of

these men in a district east of the Nauf." What does this passage otherwise mean?

But whether the magistrate was, or was not acquainted with the proceedings of the Mughls prior to their having established themselves in the province of Arracan, is not of much importance now. I have dwelt upon the point because the Government of Bengal in their despatch appear to have been so sensible of the impropriety of winking at the conduct of the emigrants, as to find it requisite to prove that no countenance had been given either by them or the magistrate to their proceedings; and they, therefore, scrupled not to strain a point to furnish an elaborate excuse for the gross negligence, to say the least of it, of the magistrate in the discharge of the most important functions of his office. The result of which neglect, will ultimately be seen to have been of the most serious consequences.

The despatch then proceeds to state:—

“ With a view to increase his force, by compelling the Mughls who yet remained within the province of Chittagong to join him, he (Kingberring) despatched an armed force into the province.”

“ It therefore became necessary for the magistrate to call for the assistance of the British troops, both to protect the Mughls, and to expel the parties despatched by Kingberring, and he accordingly directed the commanding officer of the station to detach to the frontier the whole of the disposable force. Another consideration also rendered this measure advisable, namely, that in the event of Kingberring being foiled in his attempt to

effect the conquest of Arracan, he would probably return into the Chittagong district, followed by his adherents, and pursued by the forces of the Burman Government. To prevent these armed bodies entering our territories, required every practicable measure of precaution."

The reader would conclude, that as a matter of course the troops that would be requisite, as a precautionary measure, to guard against such evils, would be a respectable force. But the magistrate of Chittagong thought otherwise. He had so exalted an opinion of the prowess of the British troops, and so contemptible a one for that of the Burman forces, that a detachment of one hundred sepoy, with their compliment of native and european officers, namely, Lieutenant Lloyd and myself, from the second battalion fifteenth regiment Bengal native infantry, were the only force which was sent off.

The distance from Chittagong to Teck Nauf is about one hundred and forty miles. The cultivation of the province can only be said to extend to Ramoo, from whence it is circumscribed to Cox's Bazaar by mountainous forests. The communication between Cox's Bazaar and Teck Nauf lies along the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, the passage on the sands of the shore, in some parts impassable but at the ebb of the tide, and during the whole space the mountains covered with forests stretch into the sea.

These mountains form an effectual barrier

between the provinces of Arracan and Chittagong, with the exception of the pass of Otea Ghaut.

The distance along this dreary and desolate coast, from Cox's Bazaar to Teck Nauf, is sixty miles. It is intercepted with innumerable small rivers, part of which were crossed upon rafts constructed on the spot, and the others forded at the ebb of the tide. Not a hut or a blade of grass was to be seen the whole of the way—or was water to be procured but from the mountain currents, which are extremely pernicious. There is scarcely space to pitch a tent along the whole line of the coast; but with these we were not troubled, they having been destroyed by gales prior to our leaving Ramoo. Herds of wild buffaloes sometimes threatened to dispute the passage, but took flight on our near approach. The roaring of the sea and trumpeting of the wild elephants at night, rendered it truly awful. On one occasion a herd of elephants approached so very close that in the dark we anticipated being trod to death, and the only chance of our escape seemed to be by climbing up some trees that happened to be near at hand: however in the morning, it was discovered that our fears were groundless, and that a deep ravine, between the beach and the forest, had saved us. The privations of the detachment were very great. The elephants and bullocks were unable to travel. The por-

ters who had been hired to carry our baggage, mostly deserted us on the first day's march from Cox's Bazaar. The men had little or no food with them. They could not comprehend the nature of the country they were marching in; still less could they conceive that any good could result from advancing. At length, worn out with fatigue and nearly exhausted for want of proper supplies, they became exceedingly dissatisfied. On the third day's march, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, a serjeant of grenadiers halted, dropped his halberd, drew his sword, and swore he would not advance another yard, the whole detachment followed his example and ordered their arms. This was a very awkward occurrence and might have been attended with very serious consequences. The men remained firm for some time to their resolution—and it was not without great difficulty that they could at last be prevailed upon to advance.

The despatch of so small a detachment, and at such a period of the year, to Teck Nauf, although approved of by the Government of Bengal, was a measure highly objectionable upon many grounds; a step equally contrary to policy as it was to humanity.

If a military force had been absolutely requisite on the frontier, advanced to a distance of one hundred and forty miles from headquarters, required to depend upon its own exertions,

as reinforcements could not be expected, for the purpose of keeping in awe twenty or thirty thousand men, (the emigrants) and to impede the march of "*the forces of the Burman Government,*" in event of their defeating the Mugh insurgents, and pursuing them into the Company's province, it certainly ought to have been a respectable force; because, if the Mughhs were resolved at all hazards to accomplish their end, or had been in the least degree disposed to have been troublesome, supplied as they were with arms—still more so if the Burmese forces should have driven them from Arracan and pursued them into the Chittagong district, of what avail, for such a purpose, could a hundred men possibly have been?

Again, the detachment marched in June the period when the rainy season commences, and which is heavier in Chittagong than in any other part of Bengal, it sometimes falling in torrents, without intermission, for four or five and twenty days together, so that the whole country is completely inundated. This was the case in the year 1811, for on the third day's march the rains began, and continued the whole of the journey; the men wading up to their bodies in water until they reached the coast. When the detachment arrived at its destination, Teck Nauf, half the men had been left on the coast unable to keep up. The detachment was immediately attacked with a

malignant jungle fever peculiar to the country, which in a few days reduced it to about twenty men capable of doing duty. The deaths were proportionably large. The situation of the detachment was therefore alarming; because, even if the Mughs had been in the least degree hostile, they might with ease have cut it off, and acquired its supply of arms and ammunition.

Teck Nauf is a narrow neck of land at the foot of the hills, about eight miles in length and four in breadth, jetting into the sea. At the extreme point lies the Island of Shuparee, the disputed claim to which constituted *the ostensible* grounds of the war. The island is separated from the main land only by a shallow channel which is continually filling up.

A few days after the arrival of the detachment at Teck Nauf some messengers came to our camp from Kingberring, to assure us that he had not the slightest intention of committing any depredations in the Company's provinces—expressing a strong sense of the gratitude which himself and followers entertained for the protection they had hitherto received; but that as they were about to re-conquer their native country, they wished for the assistance of the Company, and if it was granted Kingberring would hold Arracan as their vassal, and pay whatever tribute the government might fix. The Vakeels brought with them as presents for the officers of the detach-

ment, the magistrate, and commanding officer of Chittagong, several bags of gold dust, some elephants tusks, and Burman ponies. The Vakeels were detained in our camp until the circumstance had been reported to the magistrate; and by his authority they were dismissed, with an intimation, that the British Government would have no concern in the transaction. The vakeels then endeavoured to bribe Lieutenant Lloyd with large sums of money, to allow of a body of five hundred armed Mughls to pass his post without molestation.

Kingberring continued but a few days in his position on the Nauf before he advanced into the interior of Arracan. The tranquility of the frontier having been restored, those of the detachment who survived the dreadful effects of the climate were in July recalled to Chittagong.

In his progress to the capital of Arracan Kingberring repeatedly engaged and defeated the Burmese troops; and his steps were marked by the most wanton and prodigal effusion of human blood. After having laid seige for some months to the capital, it at length capitulated upon condition that the lives and the property of the inhabitants should be held sacred; but no sooner were the Mughls in possession than the whole of the population were butchered in the most atrocious manner. Some of the Mugh insurgents who had been present, and with whom I con-

versed subsequent to their expulsion from Arracan, spoke in rapturous terms of the tragical event, and boasted of the revenge they had taken for former cruelties practised by the Burmese towards them. The insurgents stated the number of Burmese and inhabitants of Arracan slain, during the short period of six months, to have been thirty thousand.*

The magistrate of Chittagong, and also the Government of Fort William, clearly saw the evil consequences likely to follow, and that the Burmese would conclude that the Mughls, who had for so many years been refugees under the protection of the British Government, inhabiting a populous and fertile part of the province of Chittagong, surrounded with the civil power and an efficient police, could not possibly have concocted their plans, concentrated their forces, and *equipped* themselves with arms and warlike stores adequate to risk such an enterprise, without the connivance, if not the aid of the British Government.

To obviate the difficulties and possible dangers to which the British Government might be exposed, the consequence of such an impression on the mind of the Burmese, on the probable turn

* After the capture of the capital the Mughls paraded the streets, celebrating their victory, with the heads of the men and women, and entire children, stuck upon the points of bamboo poles, from fifteen to five and twenty feet long.

of affairs, the magistrate of Chittagong despatched a letter to the Rajah of Arracan to *explain matters and point out to him the light in which he should view the transaction*. The authorities in Calcutta equally anxious, and apprehensive of being placed in a state of war with the Burmese, resolved to despatch an envoy to Rangoon “*to undeceive the Burmese Court with regard to their supposed participation in the proceedings of Kingberring.*”

The whole of the province of Arracan being under the controul of Kingberring’s officers, the magistrate’s letter to the Rajah did not reach its destination. While the British envoy was on his way to Rangoon a Burmese Vakeel, who had been despatched by the Government of Rangoon, landed in Calcutta to make representations to the British Government regarding the proceedings of the Mugh insurgents in Arracan, and to require “*that the British Government would take the necessary steps to prevent their finding refuge in the Company’s territories.*”

On the arrival of the British envoy, Captain Canning, at Rangoon, he was waited upon by the British inhabitants resident there, who acquainted him that an envoy had been despatched by the viceroy of Pegue to Calcutta. They also stated, that when information reached Rangoon regarding the proceedings of the Mugh, the viceroy had assembled them at his house and declared to them, that he had good grounds to assert, that the

Bengal Government had furnished the Mugh emigrants with arms and ammunition to enable them to invade Arracan. That the Viceroy had also immediately laid an embargo on all ships in the Port of Rangoon belonging to British subjects. The British residents further acquainted the envoy, that they had solemnly declared to the viceroy their firm conviction that the invaders of Arracan had acted entirely without the aid of the British Government:—and that they had all signed a letter to the address of the governor general to that effect, which had been transmitted to Calcutta, and by these means the embargo upon the ships had been removed.

The envoy previous to being introduced to the viceroy had interviews with several members of the Rangoon Government, who were all decidedly of the same opinion as the viceroy, *that the British Government had participated in the proceedings of Kingberring*. Captain Canning therefore addressed an official note to the viceroy, detailing the circumstances, and the arguments resulting from them *to prove* that the British Government had no concern in the invasion of Arracan; and further, *by the express desire of the British Government*, Captain Canning assured the viceroy “*that Kingberring and his adherents would not be allowed an asylum within the British territories, which on the contrary they would not, if possible, be*

permitted to enter, or having entered would be compelled to quit."

This declaration on the part of the British Government towards the Court of Ava was very proper; and considering it to have been *officially* communicated by a *British envoy especially deputed for the purpose*, it might be supposed that it would have been rigidly adhered to. It was a solemn compact, and ought to have been held sacred; the honour of the British character was involved in it. The sequel, however, will prove, that in the declaration there was not the slightest sincerity; on the contrary, that it was devoid of truth, and only made to deceive.

It however so far had the desired effect, as to cause the viceroy of Rangoon to doubt the British Government having participated in the invasion of Arracan; but not so at the Court of Ava, for there the most positive conviction was entertained that they had. The reason assigned by the envoy for the viceroy's ready conviction, was the circumstance of his being deeply engaged in commercial speculations, and "*therefore averse to measures tending to disturb the amity between the two states.*"

Although Kingberring had succeeded in the conquest of Arracan, little doubt was entertained but that as soon as the Burmese could collect their troops he would be expelled. Such indeed

was the opinion expressed by many of the Mughls to Lieutenant Lloyd and myself, when we advanced to the frontier in 1811, to afford them protection against being forcibly compelled to join his standard. The Government of Bengal thought otherwise, for in their despatch to the Court of Directors of the 23rd of January, 1812, they declare that *they had no "expectation" of the event*. It, however, so happened, that in January Kingberring was defeated, Arracan re-taken, and the insurgents massacred wherever they were found. The Government of Bengal in their despatch of the 23rd of January, 1812, thus notice the transaction:—

“ Your Honorable Court will observe from the tenor of these last advices (from the magistrate of Chittagong, dated the 11th and 14th of January) that contrary to expectation and appearances, the Government of Ava has found the means of collecting a force of sufficient strength to defeat the troops of Kingberring, who, deserted by most of his followers has become a fugitive. That numbers of his people whom he drew from Chittagong, and the inhabitants of Arracan have fled for refuge to our territories, and more are expected. That the magistrate with a view to prevent the probable incursions of the Burmese troops in pursuit of the fugitives, has instructed the commanding officer of the station to proceed with the whole of the disposable force and take post on the frontier, furnishing him with directions for the guidance of his conduct, until our orders should be received regarding the course of proceeding to be observed with respect to the fugitives; for the surrender of whom it may be expected, that demands will be made on the part of the Government of

Ava, even if the forces of the latter should not penetrate into the province of Chittagong, for the purpose of seizing or destroying them."

From this paragraph we collect the fact, that when the British envoy, in September, was pledging the honor of the British Government, "*that the insurgents should not be allowed an asylum in the British territories,*" it was only under the supposition that the Government of Ava had not the means of defeating Kingberring and the insurgents; but when "*contrary to appearances and expectation*" the Burmese had expelled them, we find the British Government, regardless of their solemnly plighted honor, so far from preventing the insurgents "*entering their provinces,*" approving of measures which the magistrate of Chittagong had adopted to cover their flight, speaking as though it were a matter of perfect indifference of the numbers who had returned, and as if it were a subject for congratulation to the Court of Directors announcing "*that more might be expected.*"

It might be difficult to trace upon the records of any other Government on the face of the globe another such transaction, of which, however, the Indian Government seemed not only vain, but proud, wishing to transmit it to posterity in the most unequivocal terms, in their despatch to the Court of Directors, under date the 23rd of January, 1812, they say:—" *Such of the natives of*

Arracan who had been established in the district of Chittagong, as accompanied Kingberring, the magistrate has been directed to desire the commanding officer of the British troops to permit them to take refuge within the limits of our territories."

These facts speak for themselves. How far they may prove the honor and integrity of the Indian Government, or whether they are calculated to impress the British public with feelings of approbation, or to point out the expediency of any longer continuing the legislative powers of India in the hands of a company of merchants, it is not for me to determine; but it seems that they are quite at variance with the assertions and declarations made by our constituted authorities.

The British Government declare that they were ignorant of the designs of Kingberring to invade Arracan, until he had established himself in that province—that they had made every effort to effect the seizure of his person—they had pledged themselves not to allow him or his followers to enter their provinces, or having entered to compel them to quit; but when he was defeated by the Burmese forces, they order troops to the boundary of their frontier to cover the retreat of the insurgents, and issue positive orders to afford them protection: and yet these are the "*moderate, forbearing, and amicable measures pursued,*" which the Government of Bengal, in their

despatch, “ *trust the Honorable Court of Directors will see with satisfaction!* ”

Early in January, 1812, the troops at Chittagong proceeded to Ramoo, where Colonel Morgan established his head-quarters. The pass through the mountains of Otea Ghaut, and the post of Rutnapulling were immediately occupied by strong detachments, as also a portion of the force advanced to Teck Nauf.

The Burmese forces accompanied by the Rajah of Arracan, advanced to the boundary of that province upon the banks of the Nauf river. From thence the Rajah addressed a respectful appeal to the magistrate of Chittagong,—disavowing, in the most decided terms, that he had any intention of entering the Company’s province, “ and merely demanded the surrender of the two principal leaders of the insurrection.” To this demand the magistrate replied that, “ *no answer could be given to any propositions on their part, until the orders of government were received.* ”

The Burmese commander and the Rajah of Arracan then next addressed another letter to the magistrate, demanding not only the insurgent chiefs “ but all the fugitives, also that Dr. Mc. Rae, Surgeon of Chittagong, should be given up to them, upon the grounds of his having assisted Kingberring in his invasion of Arracan; ” and they threatened, in case of refusal, “ to invade

the Company's territories with a force of eighty thousand men, and pursue the fugitives even to Dacca."

In reply to these demands, the magistrate of Chittagong informed the Rajah of Arracan that every possible search was making for the insurgent chiefs, and when apprehended they should be properly secured; but the question of surrendering them was a subject for negotiation with the British envoy at Rangoon and the Government of Ava. The magistrate concluded by cautioning the Burmese against entering the British territories.

In this state of affairs more troops were advanced to the frontier of Chittagong, and every precaution taken to secure the province from invasion. A ship and a cruiser of twenty guns were also sent off with the utmost expedition to Rangoon, to enable the envoy to withdraw in event of a rupture between the two states, and which the menacing position of the Burmese on the frontier was calculated to provoke. Other motives for the despatch of the vessels were, the Government of Fort William did not feel satisfied under the actual condition of affairs, that the barbarous disposition of the Burmese Court would adhere to the sacred rights and privileges of a representative of a foreign state, and that they might violate the law of nations so far as to place restraint upon the envoy's person. Se-

condly, to provide for the safety of the persons and property of the British subjects residing at Rangoon.

The Government of Fort William, adverting to the charge preferred by the Rajah of Arracan against Dr. Mc. Rea of having assisted Kingbering in his invasion, observe: “ *in justice to Dr. Mc. Rae we afforded him an opportunity of replying to the charge, although we were far from supposing it well founded.*” And then they go on to state—“ *Dr. Mc. Rae’s explanation, as the Government ANTICIPATED, was in every respect satisfactory.*”

That the Government of Bengal should have called upon Dr. Mc. Rae to refute the charge brought against him by the Burmese, was natural enough; and that Dr. Mc. Rae should have denied it cannot be a matter of surprise; but it does appear somewhat *singular* that the government should not only have been *satisfied* with Dr. Mc. Rae’s *simple denial* of the fact, without instituting any enquiry, without calling upon the Burmese to produce the authority they declared they had for asserting the fact, but should have “ *anticipated*” *his entire innocence.*

The most extraordinary part of the whole transaction was, the Government of Bengal sent to Captain Canning, at Rangoon, a copy of Dr. Mc. Rae’s *explanatory letter*, as they say, “ *to enable him to demonstrate to the Burmese Government that the charge preferred against Dr. Mc. Rae*

by its officers, of having countenanced and encouraged Kingberring in his invasion of Arracan, was utterly void of foundation."

Now although the Government of Calcutta might have been *satisfied* with the explanation of Dr. Mc. Rae, it was certainly a most extraordinary mode of conveying conviction to the Burmese, sending them a copy of a letter from the *very person* whom they had charged with an offence, and who happened to deny the accusation, and with which denial they were expected to be satisfied that it was "*utterly void of foundation.*" It is scarcely possible to conceive that a more difficult task could have been imposed upon an envoy, than to require of him, from such a document, to demonstrate that the charge preferred against Dr. Mc. Rae, was "*utterly void of foundation.*" Indeed the very circumstance of offering such testimony, that too at the very moment when the Government of Bengal had violated their honour, by allowing of the Mughls, after their most solemn pledge to the contrary, to take refuge within the province of Chittagong, unless the Government of Ava and all their officers were first rate fools, was calculated to encrease rather than remove the impression; if not, to convince them that the British Government had taken a part in the insurrection.

The reports then current in Chittagong, and certainly believed, were, that arms and ammuni-

tion had been supplied to the Mughls by some European gentlemen resident there; and the name of another officer, in the civil service, besides Dr. Mc. Rae was spoken of.*

It may not be improper here to offer a remark upon the stealing of the cannon from Dr. Mc. Rae's dockyard. Dockyards in India as well as in England are never left at night without watchmen. Indeed in India they are particularly well guarded, to prevent the depredations to which they, otherwise, would be subjected. Is it likely then that Dr. Mc. Rae should have neglected to take the same precautions as other ship builders would

* Sir John Malcolm in his Political History of India, observes his work "at this period would be incomplete without referring to some events which has brought us into occasional collision with the Burmese Government." As only *some of the events* were to be noticed, the reader of course would conclude that those would be the most important, and amongst the rest, the events of 1811, that have been spoken of in the foregoing pages. But, no!—Sir John does not seem to have considered them as worthy of record, and in the following sweeping passage gets rid of them.

"In 1811, some bold adventurers belonging to the colony of Mughls, under a chief called Kingberring, commenced predatory attacks on the country of Arracan. This caused the troops of the latter to enter the Company's territory, and much complaint and recrimination took place between the officers on the British and Burmese frontiers."

Why the events have not been more fully noticed Sir John can best explain; but surely if his object was to render his work "*complete*," by neglecting them, he has failed in his intentions.

to secure their property? If not, must it not appear somewhat singular how it happened that the cannon was carried off without resistance—the watchmen neglect to alarm the police—the police fail to report it to the magistrate—and the magistrate to the government!—All this may have been done it is true, but if it had, is it not extraordinary that the Government of Bengal should have failed to have mentioned it in their despatches? If the magistrate had been made acquainted with the depredations committed in Dr. Mc. Rae's dockyard, and had adopted measures to endeavour to recover the cannon, or had taken the necessary precaution to guard against the future, is it likely that the Mughls should have attempted to carry off the cannon from Flag Staff Point, still less have contemplated so daring an enterprise as that of a seizure upon the Company's artillery and magazine?

Early in February, 1812, some Burmese troops crossed the Nauf and entered the province of Chittagong with an intention of stockading themselves, and they detached parties for the purpose of searching for the fugitives. The Burmese chiefs in Arracan, at the same time, by a strange inconsistency, sent two Vakeels to the British camp at Teck Nauf for the purpose of negotiating for their demands. The British officer commanding at Teck Nauf demanded from the Vakeels, that the Burmese troops who had entered

the province should instantly retire, otherwise the propositions they had to make could not be entertained. The Vakeels appeared to be quite surprised at the occurrence, and declared their own and their principal's entire ignorance of any such violation, or a knowledge of any parties having crossed the river; and they assured Captain Sibley of the anxious desire of the Burmese Government to continue on the most friendly terms with the British Government; and that they, the Vakeels, had been despatched for the express purpose of preventing any disagreement between the two states. The Vakeels instantly despatched information of the transaction to the commander of the Burmese forces in Arracan, who issued orders for the immediate return of the parties from the Company's territories. The Vakeels were then permitted to proceed to Colonel Morgan's camp at Ramoo.

On the 21st of February a second party of about five hundred Burmese crossed the Nauf for the purpose, as it was said, of endeavouring to obtain some supplies, the frontier of Arracan having been completely exhausted. On their landing they were immediately attacked by some of the British troops, and they retired; not however without returning the fire, burning the village of Necla, and leaving several of their men prisoners. As soon as this affair came to the knowledge of the Burmese commander in

Arracan, he despatched a Vakeel to the British camp, solemnly denying all knowledge of the transaction, requesting that the prisoners who had been taken might be returned, their leaders sent guarded, as their heads would be taken off, for having conducted an armed force into the British territories.

The Vakeels had also been provided with the following letter from the Burmese commander to the magistrate of Chittagong :

“ Kingberring, Larunbage, and Nakloo, have destroyed the four districts of the king, have killed 20,000 of the inhabitants of Arracan, and have fled into the Company's territories. My people have gone after them, and the above traitors have fled to the Company's territories ; several Burmese that did enter are put into confinement ; you will allow them to return. The merchants of the two countries formerly traded ; let them now continue to do so. Let there be no strife between the two countries for Kingberring, Larunbage, Nakloo, or the other delinquents. It is therefore better that you deliver them up to us.”

A great and serious injury had been sustained for many years by the state of Aya from the lawless conduct of the Mugh refugees, enjoying the protection of the British Government. A hord of desperate barbarians, infuriated by the recollection of past injuries, inflamed by a desire of conquest and plunder, had committed every species of atrocity, cruelty, and oppression, in the province of an ally. They had massacred upwards of twenty thousand un-offending people,

merely because they had submitted to the Burmese authority, and would not then rebel. A solemn pledge had been given by a British ambassador, by the express orders of the British Government, that the insurgents should not be again allowed an asylum within their territories; yet, nevertheless, not only an asylum but protection had been afforded to them. Yet under all these aggravating, unjustifiable, and unpardonable circumstances, the party sinned against is seen with the greatest forbearance, merely supplicating for the surrender of the ringleaders of the insurrection, using no reproachful or threatening language; but, on the contrary, expressing great anxiety for the preservation of the peace and good understanding which had existed between the two states.

When the Burmese troops first advanced to the borders of Arracan, the magistrate of Chittagong informed the Rajah of Arracan that "he had been directed to apprehend Kingberring and the other leaders whose surrender they had demanded, and that he was endeavouring to effect their apprehension." This communication was evidently calculated to convey to the minds of the Burmese a belief of, a predetermination on the part of the British Government to surrender the persons of the insurgent fugitive chiefs, in event of their being taken. But as the British Government had never entertained any such in-

tention, the communication was disapproved of, and the magistrate rebuked for the disingenuous proceeding of conveying intimations calculated to suggest an erroneous construction of their meaning.

But while the Government of Bengal were censuring their magistrate for conduct "*inexpedient as well as incompatible with the maxims of equity and propriety,*" it appears that they themselves were pursuing a line of conduct *far more objectionable*. They had instructed the envoy at Rangoon to assure the Burmese that "*Kingberring and his adherents would not be allowed an asylum within the British territories, which on the contrary they would not, if possible, be permitted to enter, or having entered would be compelled to quit ;*"* but at the same time they write to the magistrate of Chittagong, and direct him "to desire the commanding officer of the British troops to permit them to take refuge within *the limits of*" their "*territories.*"† Again while they were referring the Rajah of Arracan and the Burmese commander on the frontier of Chittagong to the British envoy at Rangoon, to settle the question of acceding to their demands for the surrender of Kingberring, and the other fugitive chiefs, the Government of Calcutta write to the magistrate of Chittagong that, "no principal of public law and justice will require us to

* Extract of Despatches, page 9.

† Ibid. 11.

do violence to those feelings of humanity which naturally oppose the measure of delivering up those unfortunate, though guilty, persons, to the cruel and fatal vengeance of their enemies," If these were the sentiments and resolution of the British Government, why were they not openly and fearlessly at once avowed to the Burmese commander, and the Rajah of Arracan? How could the demand for the surrender of the fugitives, under such circumstances, become a subject for negotiation with the British envoy at Rangoon? If the referring the Rajah of Arracan, and the Burmese commander to the envoy at Rangoon, was merely for the purpose of misleading or deceiving them, was not such a line of conduct equally "*disingenuous*" and "*incompatible with equity and propriety*" on the part of the British Government, as in the other case it had been with the magistrate.

It is very difficult to comprehend the "*principles of public law and justice*," upon which the Indian Government profess to act. At one period they have little or no hesitation in delivering up the leaders of an insurrection, knowing that they would be executed: at another time they refuse, out of "*feelings of humanity*," to surrender the leaders of a far more formidable one, some of whom had been engaged in the former insurrection. Did not "*public law and justice*" require the British Government to have taken the

most decisive measures to have prevented a lawless band of robbers and murderers from generating in their provinces? But when they had neglected to take such measures, and the evils had shone forth, did not "*public law and justice*" demand that the British Government should themselves have made an example of the leaders of the insurrection, as well for the ungrateful abuse of hospitality they had made of their asylum, as for the atrocities they had committed on the province of a friendly state while enjoying the British protection? The reason assigned by the Bengal Government of 1812, for refusing to surrender the leaders of the insurrection to the Burmese, is a decided reflection upon the conduct of the government of 1798. But giving them all possible credit for those highly creditable, praiseworthy, and laudable feelings of humanity, with which they possibly were actuated, the fact runs thus :—In 1798, the Government of Bengal, on the score of "*public law and justice*," surrender three state criminals to the officers of the Burmese Government, in consideration of the enormity of the offences they had committed against a state they had abandoned, and while enjoying the British protection; and by these means, in all human probability, saved the lives of many thousand human beings. In 1812, the government, on the score of "*humanity*," refuse to surrender three desperate ruffians, who had

headed and instigated the most wanton and brutal massacre of twenty thousand of their fellow creatures; and the consequence of indulging in this prodigal feeling of humanity, was the engendering of an hostile feeling on the part of the Burmese, which has terminated in the sacrifice of the lives of not less than a hundred thousand human beings, attended with an expense, to the British Government, of upwards of twelve millions sterling. So much for "*public law, justice, and humanity.*"

To return to the proceedings on the Chittagong frontier in 1811. The security of the province having been fully provided for, the Government of Calcutta assumed a higher tone towards the Burmese on the frontier of Arracan. They instructed the magistrate to convey to the Burmese chief, "*in a formal and authentic manner, the sense they entertained of their insults and aggressions;*" at the same time demanding the retreat of their forces from the menacing position which they occupied on the frontier of their possessions; apprising them that any future incursions of their troops would be repelled by force of arms; and that "*the requisitions which they had made must be negotiated through the envoy at Rangoon!*"—This is what the government, in their despatch to the Court of Directors under date the 25th of May, 1812, calls "*repelling insult and maintaining inviolate the honour and credit of the British name,*

an assertion of national dignity both in language and manner." What stuff and nonsense to talk about "*the honour and credit of the British name,*" after it had been so repeatedly and so grossly violated.*

* I hope the reader will not accuse me of vanity if I venture to intrude myself on their notice in regard to a circumstance which took place at that time. Colonel Morgan having expressed a decided opinion that in case of attack on the part of the Burmese, who were on the borders of Arracan, the British troops could not act in the mountains against the invaders without pioneers. I therefore ventured to offer my services to raise a company of natives on the spot, as months must have elapsed before any regular pioneers could be brought down from the upper provinces. But contrary to the expectations of Colonel Morgan and myself the Commander-in-Chief thought otherwise.

I should not have mentioned the circumstance as effecting myself, but to show in what a clumsy way affairs are, or at least were managed in India.

Head-quarters, Calcutta, March 19th, 1812.

Sir,

The commander-in-chief has directed me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th instant. And to add, that H. E. is sorry he cannot comply, in the present instance, with the request which your letter contains, as it is not in contemplation to encrease the present establishment of pioneers.

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

Ensign White,
15th, N. I.

ALEX. MACGREGOR MURRAY.
M. S.

The resolution of the government, as conveyed by the magistrate of Chittagong to the Rajah of Arracan, was received by the Burmese authorities with every mark of respect and submission, with an intimation on their part, that it would be forwarded to the Court of Ava ; but that they must await orders from their government before they could retire. Towards the end of April, the necessary orders arrived from Ammerapura, for the whole of the Burmese troops to withdraw from the frontier of Arracan : immediately after which the Company's force retired upon Chittagong.

It is necessary here to revert to the proceedings of the envoy at Rangoon.

The "*instructions*" issued by the Government of Calcutta to Captain Canning for the guidance of his conduct on this occasion, would have been a valuable document to have assisted in developing the merits of the conduct of the British Government towards the Burmese ; but unfortunately, with many others, it has been withheld.

After a considerable delay at Rangoon, the envoy received from the Court of Ava a reply to his communication. The viceroy of Rangoon had also received orders to forward the envoy, with every mark of honour and distinction to the capital of Ammerapura. But while the preparations were in progress for Captain Canning's departure, the ships which had been despatched

by the Government of Bengal to provide for his safety, and to convey to the Burmese Government a representation of the proceedings of the Burmese troops on the Chittagong frontier, arrived at Rangoon on the 18th of March, 1812.

On the arrival of the vessels the town of Rangoon was thrown into a state of the utmost confusion, the members of the government, and even the viceroy himself, entertaining a firm conviction that the British Government in sending the cruiser had no other intention than that of endeavouring to obtain possession of the town. On the day following their arrival, the viceroy retired to a grove a short distance from the town where he mustered his forces, amounting to four or five hundred men; and after issuing various orders, directed them to disperse as they had assembled, in small bodies, to prevent discovery and alarm. On the evening of the same day, the envoy, by invitation, waited upon the viceroy, and communicated to him the state of affairs on the frontier of Chittagong, the envoy observing that in the then state of affairs he could not possibly proceed to the capital; but he expressed his hopes that notwithstanding what had occurred an amicable adjustment of pending differences might be effected. The envoy then requested the despatch of a war boat to the capital to convey a letter to the heir apparent explaining "*the grounds of his resolution to suspend his intended*

journey to the capital until he had received a written assurance from the court that orders had been despatched to the commander of the Burmese forces and the Rajah of Arracan to desist from their menaces and arrogant demands, and to respect the territories of the Honourable Company." The viceroy for a long while resisted a compliance with the requisition of the envoy, and then only upon the envoy's declaring that he would otherwise return to Bengal. But still the viceroy continued to urge the envoy's proceeding to the capital.

The viceroy reprobated in the strongest terms the conduct of the the Burmese chiefs on the frontier of Arracan; promising that he would himself forward to the heir apparent, and commander-in-chief of the Burmese forces, copies of the offensive letters of the Burmese chiefs, and undertook that ample atonement should be made for their having been written.

The viceroy continued to entertain a very great antipathy to the situation in which the Vakeels were moored off Rangoon, and he entreated of the envoy to send the Malabar away from before the town. While Rangoon was in this state of agitation, a pilot schooner arrived from Calcutta with despatches for the envoy; and contrary to custom, without the usual previous notice, proceeded directly off the town. The alarm it produced is thus described by Captain Canning:—"The schooner had no sooner come to an anchor opposite the wharf, than it was generally

rumoured that the English were now certainly come to take possession of the place; that the Malabar, Amboyna, and Schooner were already at hand, that more ships of war were on their way up the river, and that during the night the town would assuredly be battered down and destroyed. The utmost degree of alarm prevailed. The Bazaars, at that hour much thronged, were deserted, many of the inhabitants prepared to rise in favour of the English, many to oppose them, and still more for the purpose of plunder, and many actually left the town and sought refuge in the jungles."

While the envoy was contemplating a visit to the viceroy, as calculated to allay the extraordinary agitation prevailing, a messenger arrived from the viceroy entreating that he would immediately repair to his, the viceroy's, house, as the only possible mode of preventing a general insurrection of the people, fermented by the inferior members of the government. Gongs and drums were in the mean time sounded throughout the streets; some sent by the viceroy to order the people to remain quietly within their houses, and others by the opposite party, directing them to arm themselves, and to be in readiness each man opposite the door of his house.

When Captain Canning reached the viceroy's residence he there found assembled the viceroy, the deputy-governor, and the inferior members of the government in a state of the utmost

embarrassment and alarm. The envoy explained the object of the arrival of the schooner, and stated that the two nations were still at peace, that matters might yet be settled as the British Government was still disposed to listen to proposals, on their troops being withdrawn from the frontier of the British territories, and the damage they had done made good. The envoy added, that then if the wishes of the Burmese chiefs were stated in proper terms, their claims would be taken into consideration, if negotiated through him, or through an accredited agent of the Burmese Government at the Court of Calcutta.

It is unnecessary to follow the envoy through all the curious incidents which happened during his residence at Rangoon, I shall therefore only mention the most prominent. Subsequent to Captain Canning's visit to the viceroy he received information of a plan that had been formed to seize his person, as an hostage for the immediate departure of the Malabar, and as the means of obtaining any terms the Court of Ava might choose to demand pending the negotiation for the surrender of the fugitive chiefs. The correctness of the report seemed to be confirmed by the fact, that while Captain Canning was on his way to the viceroy's residence he received a message requesting him to leave his escort behind, or at least that they should proceed without their arms; and again, on his arrival at the viceroy's house, he found the gates were closed, and

only opened on a declaration that he would retire; his orderlies were also refused admittance into the hall of audience until he had repeated the threat of retiring. Captain Canning, therefore, suddenly quitted the town and repaired on board the Malabar cruiser to take up his residence. While the envoy with his escort and followers were proceeding on board the Malabar, the launch of the Amboyna, full of sepoys, towed by one of the boats of the Malabar, had separated from the other boats by the strength of the current. The people of two large Burmese war boats seized the tow rope, and attempted to tow the two boats on shore, and from which they were alone prevented by a midshipman of the Malabar cutting the tow rope.

As soon as the envoy had reached the Malabar he despatched a letter to the viceroy with an assurance that his intentions were pacific, and that he would take an early opportunity of acquainting him of the motives which had guided his conduct. The envoy at the same time demanded atonement for the outrage committed by the war boats. On the following morning the Rangoon Government interpreter waited upon the envoy, with a letter from the viceroy expressive of the most amicable sentiments, signifying that the persons who had committed some of the acts of insult of which the envoy had complained, had been confined in irons; but he

denied that any design had been entertained of imposing a restraint upon the envoy's person; adding, that what had passed ought not to be the cause of a rupture between the two states; and therefore proposed sending his son on the next day for the purpose of paying a visit of respect. The envoy, however, declined receiving the visit and renewed his demand for atonement. A second and even a third letter was sent by the viceroy, couched in the most conciliatory terms, soliciting a reconciliation; observing, that he had afforded the envoy every satisfaction for the injuries he had complained of, disavowing his concern in those acts, and expressing his intention of affording the atonement demanded for the aggression of the war boats. The envoy still declined all friendly intercourse until the atonement was absolutely made, and which at length was done "*in the most formal and public manner.*" The viceroy's son and nephew then visited the envoy, and things resumed their usual course with the sole difference of the envoy residing on board the Malabar instead of on shore.

When reporting these transactions to the Government of Bengal, on the 5th of April 1812, Captain Canning transmitted an original letter addressed by the viceroy of Rangoon to Tyndapoo, the commander of the Burmese forces on the frontier of Chittagong, regarding his violation of the British territory, dissuading him from a repetition of it;

and which letter the viceroy requested might be forwarded by the British Government to Tynlapoo.

The Government of Bengal by this time had begun to discover that no advantage whatever had arisen from the presence of an armed force at Rangoon, but on the contrary, that it had been productive of considerable embarrassments, which had nearly defeated the object of the mission by creating fresh causes of irritation; that too at a moment when the Burmese on the Chittagong frontier had evinced a pacific disposition, and were actually withdrawing their forces. Again the Government of Bengal considering that the object of the mission had been accomplished, by the explanations afforded to the Burmese Government of the circumstances attending the late invasion of Arracan, it was determined that orders of recall should be transmitted to Captain Canning, and at the same time a manifesto of the British Government, to be delivered to the viceroy, and transmitted to the Court of Ava, declaring the motives for sending the mission, the accomplishment of it, and the reasons for sending the Amboyna and Malabar—that as the Burmese forces on the frontier had been reduced, and the remainder were preparing to retire, orders had been issued for withdrawing the British troops to their ordinary stations—that as the British Government had no demands to make upon the Burmese

Government, and as the presence of the envoy with his escort, and the ships Amboyna and Malabar, tended only to excite uneasiness in the minds of the viceroy and members of the Government of Rangoon, while the distrust they had manifested necessarily created the same sensation in the mind of the envoy, under all which circumstances no purpose remained to be answered; either by the envoy's continuance at Rangoon, or by his proceeding to the Court of Ava—it was therefore deemed adviseable that he should return to Bengal—and after assurances of an anxious desire to maintain and improve the relations of amity and concord with the state of Ava, it concluded with an intimation that “*if the state of Ava should have any claims or demands upon the British Government, they might be conveniently and satisfactorily adjusted by the despatch of a Vakeel, on the part of the Burmese Government to Calcutta.*”

It will have been observed, that the only demand the Burmese had made, or seemed disposed to make, was for the surrender of the leaders of the insurrection, “Kingberring, Larunbage and Nakloo;” and they were informed “that the question of surrendering them was a subject for negotiation with the British envoy at Rangoon.” But from the manifesto of the British Government to the Court of Ava, and the ordering the envoy to withdraw from Rangoon before the question had been discussed, with an intimation to the Burmese

Government that "if they had any demands to make; they might be *conveniently* and satisfactorily adjusted by the despatch of a Vakeel to Calcutta;" it is tolerably clear, the degrading, and contemptible conduct the Government of India had descended to throughout the whole transaction, to deceive and mislead the Burmese authorities in Arracan.

But to return to the proceedings of the British envoy at Rangoon. Existing differences having been adjusted, and the usual friendly intercourse renewed, the envoy paid a visit of ceremony to the viceroy. On this occasion the viceroy earnestly requested the envoy to take up his residence again on shore; and the envoy having satisfied himself that no attempts would be made to seize upon his person, complied with the request. The envoy, shortly after, gave the viceroy an entertainment at his house, and confidence and harmony was again restored. But it was not long before other transactions occurred which occasioned considerable altercation; but on each occasion the Burmese evinced a very conciliatory disposition, and they terminated in the envoy's receiving apologies, and every concession required.

It was not until towards the end of May that the envoy's sub-interpreter returned from his mission to the Court of Ammerapura; where he

had been received in the most friendly manner by the Engy Praw, or heir apparent, in whom the principal authority of the government was invested. The interpreter had been present at two councils held in the Prince's Palace, in which the conduct of the Burmese chiefs in Arracan had been reprobated in the strongest terms, and disavowed as having been authorised. The prince had evinced great anxiety for the presence of the envoy at the Court of Ava, and he addressed a letter to Captain Canning to that effect: at the same time assuring him that orders had been issued for the recall of the Burmese forces from the frontier of Arracan.

But the arrival, about the same time as the interpreter at Rangoon, of the Ariel with the orders of the Government of Bengal for the recall of the envoy, decided Captain Canning's intended visit to the Court of Ava. He declined proceeding on the grounds, that as all matters had been amicably settled on the frontier of Chittagong by the mutual retreat of the British and Burmese forces, no subject of dispute or contention remained; and as the period of his residence in the Burmese territory had been unusually protracted, he saw no occasion for his proceeding to the capital—that as the principal object of his mission had been to convey an assurance to the Burmese Government that the British Government was totally unconcerned in the insurrection of King-

berring, nothing appeared to remain that required his presence at court.

The resolution of the envoy not to proceed to Ammarapura, and the explanations given, were by no means satisfactory to the viceroy of Rangoon, who evinced much surprise and concern on the occasion. The viceroy adverted to the envoy's former intentions of visiting the capital; to the invitations which he had received, and the compliance of the Government of Ava with his requisitions: and then further observed, that the Engy Praw would ascribe the refusal to no other motive than that of distrust and suspicion; and that if he should return without visiting the Court of Ava, no future envoy from the British Government would probably receive a similar invitation.

The envoy replied that he should not quit the country without first distinctly apprising the Engy Praw, by letter, of his motives for doing so; and he again pointed out to the viceroy the satisfactory changes which had taken place in the state of affairs on the Chittagong frontier, that rendered his journey to the capital merely a visit of ceremony. The viceroy at length became satisfied with the reasons the envoy assigned for his return to Bengal; and to prove that he did not himself entertain the slightest suspicion or mistrust on that account, accepted an invitation from the envoy to assist at an

entertainment, to be given on the next day, in honour of his Britannic Majesty's birth-day.

The envoy, under all the circumstances of the case, resolved upon delaying his departure until the return of the Amboyna from Calcutta, which he had despatched from Rangoon on the 23rd of May, as he was much in want of supplies, and the means of transporting the mission without inconvenience; and he accordingly signified his intention to the viceroy. This was prudent, because it prevented the mistrust and alarm the sudden departure of the mission would have produced on the part of the Rangoon Government.

At the period of the arrival of the Amboyna at Calcutta, the 4th of June, 1812, the government had just received intelligence from Chittagong of Kingberring having again succeeded in collecting together a considerable body of the Mughls, and of their having made their way into Arracan. The Governor-General, in his despatch to the Court of Directors, under date the 1st of August, 1812, thus notices the proceeding :

“ Under the renewal of disturbances, which had occasioned so much trouble and vexation, we felt the expediency of adopting some measures of a decisive character, with a view, if possible, to defeat the designs of the insurgents, and to oppose an effectual bar to the repetition of this great evil, as well as to satisfy the minds of the Burmese chiefs both of our entire disconnection with the projects of Kingberring, and our solicitude to prevent the invasion of their country, by people residing under the pro-

tection of the British Government ; the latter indeed was a positive obligation, which we were anxious to fulfil."

The reader cannot but be struck with surprise at the possibility of a repetition of such outrages being committed on the province of a friendly state, by means derived from the British territories ; nor will it readily be credited that it could have happened, if due precaution had been taken after the events which took place in May in the preceding year. Indeed the declaration of the Governor-General would almost lead one to believe that no "*measures of a decisive nature*" had hitherto been adopted.

Up to the period of the Burmese forces withdrawing from the frontier of Arracan, after the first invasion, Kingberring with most of the insurgents who had escaped after the re-conquest of Arracan, were pent up in the mountains between the British advance posts of Otea Ghaut, Teck Nauf, and Rutnapullung. In this situation they had been for some months ; but on the night following the withdrawing of these posts to join the head-quarters of the army at Ramoo, Kingberring with five hundred of his followers took possession of the lines at Otea Ghaut, himself occupying the bungalow of the British officers. The British troops retired to Chittagong, leaving him in entire possession of the frontier to concert fresh plans.

It is upon record, that the Government of Bengal after being aware of the dreadful atrocities that had been committed by Kingberring and the other insurgents in the province of Arracan, issued positive instructions "*to afford them an asylum*" in the British territories. How far, according to "*the law of nations*," they were justifiable, under all the circumstances of the case, to afford protection to such a lawless and merciless band of adventurers, who had quitted their province to invade the state of an ally, may admit of argument: but on one point there can be none—and that is, that when the asylum was granted, the most decisive measures ought instantly to have been adopted so as to have precluded the possibility of a repetition of such proceedings; and the very neglect of so doing was an act of disregard to the interests of their neighbours and allies, a dereliction of an imperious duty, or "*positive obligation*," tantamount to an encouragement in the undertaking.

The second invasion of Arracan took place, and troops for the third time were advanced, at a very unseasonable period of the year, to the frontier. The government *then* thought it time to adopt decisive measures; and, accordingly, they issued a proclamation, offering a "*reward for the apprehension of Kingberring, and any of his chiefs*;"—prohibiting all persons from affording them or their associates protection; and from

“aiding, and abetting their proceedings, either by raising men for his service, or by supplying him with arms, stores, boats, or provisions.”

This proclamation ought to have been issued when the intelligence reached the Calcutta Government of Kingberring's first invasion of Arracan. The only inference that is to be drawn from the neglect is, that the Government of Calcutta were secretly and sincerely wishing the insurgents success; and from their despatches it would appear that they were not unsanguine in their expectations.

The magistrate of Chittagong, on the first of June, 1812, transmitted a copy of the proclamation to the Rajah of Arracan, with a letter stating that “the Government of Bengal had under *consideration* the adoption of such further measures directed to the object of preventing the increase and repetition of the late evils, as were *consistent* with the *principles of British law*!”

Unhappily the Rajah of Arracan had no faith in the sincerity of the declarations of the magistrate of Chittagong; and it was far beyond his comprehension, as it must be that of the reader, “*the principles of British law*” which regulated the conduct of the Calcutta Government. The Rajah, therefore, in his reply to the magistrate observed that “Kingberring and his chiefs after their first discomfiture retreated into the Company's provinces, where they were protected by the

magistrate and British officers"—he animadverted on the letter of the magistrate as containing a positive promise to seize and surrender Kingberring and his accomplices—quoted the demand that had been made for the retreat of the Burmese troops from the frontier, and stated that they did retire in consequence of that requisition. He then refers to the second invasion of Arracan, and the assertion of the magistrate as also the commanding officer of the British troops, declaring their inability to seize Kingberring because of his concealment, and the number of men he had collected; charges the British Government therefore with inconsistency, and with a breach of faith; and concludes with a declaration that the matter "*must produce a war between the two nations.*"

The Rajah does not appear at this time to have been made acquainted with the promise that had been given by the British envoy to the viceroy of Rangoon, that "the insurgents should not be allowed to enter the Company's province, or having entered should be compelled to quit"—or otherwise it is possible his animadversions might have been stronger, if his actions had not been more decisive. The Governor-General in his despatch to the Court of Directors of the 1st of August, 1812, while noticing the Rajah's letter and the reply that was sent, observes:—

"In the first place the magistrate was directed to point out to the Rajah his perversion of the terms of the magistrate's letter.

He was then to observe to the Rajah, that the British Government having repeatedly declared and demonstrated that the invasion of Arracan was undertaken without even the knowledge of its officers, and that so far from encouraging, it was anxious to prevent the occurrence of such outrages, the British Government could not induce the Rajah's perseverance in assertions of an opposite tendency. That the Government had afforded the convincing proofs of its desire to maintain the relations of amity and good understanding between the two states, since it had born aggression, insult, and menace without retaliation. That when the British officers were apprised of the incursions of Kingberring into Arracan, they employed on both occasions, every effort in their power to prevent that chieftain from deriving the means of prosecuting his designs from the inhabitants, and the resources of the British territory; and that especially on the last occasion, the British Government pursued the additional measures for that purpose, which the magistrate communicated to the Rajah in his last letter; a communication which the Rajah instead of receiving as he ought with acknowledgments, he had answered in the language of insolence, accusation, and menace. That his letter was considered as affording such provocations as would induce the British Government to seek immediate reparation, and adopt without further remonstrance, measures calculated to assert and maintain its own honour, but at the same time productive of an open rupture between the two states, if it were not convinced, agreeably to recent experience, that the unbecoming and irritating language employed by the Rajah of Arracan and Tyndapoo, in their communications to our government were entirely unauthorized by the King of Ava, and directly contrary to his Majesty's sentiments and commands. That for these reasons the British Government still maintained its desire, and would still pursue for peace and amity, such measures as were practicable, consistently with its laws and principles, with a view to prevent the territory of the King of Ava from being disturbed by the inhabitants of its own."

On Kingberring's second invasion of Arracan, he was met at a short distance from the frontier by a party of Burmese troops, who attacked and defeated him. The fugitives, with Kingberring at their head, again fled into the Company's province for protection. The Burmese forces and the Rajah of Arracan on this occasion acted with great forbearance; for they neither pursued the fugitives, demanded their surrender, or even made any representation to the British Government, beyond the reply that had been sent to the magistrate's letter.

As soon as the Bengal Government became acquainted with the failure of the renewed attempt of Kingberring, the orders of recall which had been prepared on the 12th of June for the envoy (but suspended), were forwarded on the 29th of the same month to Rangoon, with a statement of the occurrences which had lately transpired in Arracan, for the purpose of their being communicated by the envoy to the Burmese Government; and after having done so, he was directed as soon as practicable to return to Bengal.

We must once more return to the proceedings of the envoy at Rangoon. The pressing invitations Captain Canning continued to receive from the viceroy to proceed to the capital, rendered his situation one of much delicacy; and it was not without great difficulty, while declining it, that he avoided giving serious offence to the Court of

Ava. When the envoy announced the period of his departure, the viceroy became extremely solicitous and anxious as to what the consequences might be to himself for having failed, after the repeated orders which he had received, to send him up by compulsory means to Ammerapura. The viceroy however, as an expedient, suggested in the first instance, that Captain Canning should address him a letter, stating that severe illness prevented his proceeding to the capital. Secondly that a gentleman belonging to the mission should be despatched to Ammerapura with the presents which had been sent by the Governor-General for the King, and the Engy Praw. Lastly, that the viceroy should address a letter to the envoy, animadverting in harsh terms on his not having sooner proceeded up the country; to the style of which letter the envoy was to pay no attention.

Captain Canning declined feigning indisposition, or complying with the proposition of sending a gentleman of the mission to the capital—but offered to send the presents;—and as for the viceroy addressing him a letter as proposed, couched in harsh and improper terms, Captain Canning warned him of the consequences, as he should be obliged to return such a reply as would be little calculated to promote the viceroy's views.

It was on the 27th of July, 1812, that the Amboyna from Calcutta arrived at Rangoon with

the instructions of recall for the envoy. Captain Canning immediately waited upon the viceroy, and detailed the events which had recently transpired in Arracan—and acquainted him of the orders which had been received for his instant return to Bengal.

The viceroy evinced great uneasiness on hearing of the envoy's recall—and declared it would be the signal for his own removal from office, or even a greater punishment. He again earnestly solicited Captain Canning's aid to relieve him from some share of responsibility, by consenting to adopt his former suggestion of pretended indisposition—and he stated that he daily expected a fifth order from the court, which might possibly be of a violent nature; but he was convinced he could not enforce compliance on Captain Canning's part. The viceroy concluded by requesting the envoy would not take offence at a few shots being fired at the departure of the vessels, by which he should establish his own exculpation. The ridiculous proposal was rejected by Captain Canning; and the viceroy being satisfied of its evil tendency, abandoned his project.

The viceroy of Rangoon was totally ignorant of the renewal of aggressions on the part of Kingberring until made acquainted by the envoy. Adverting to the reward offered in the proclamation of the magistrate of Chittagong for the apprehension of Kingberring and his associates;

a copy of which had been transmitted to the viceroy; he wished to know whether, in event of their being taken, they would be delivered up. The envoy replied "*he had no authority to discuss that point, and that if the King of Ava had any claims on that or any other subject to make on the British Government, it was expected that he would send an ambassador to Bengal for that purpose.*"

The British envoy, or the Government of Bengal, has told a deliberate falsehood. The envoy declared to the viceroy that "*he had no authority to discuss the point*" of delivering Kingberring and his associates in event of their being taken. The Bengal Government in their despatch of the 1st of August, 1821, after noticing the second invasion of Arracan, the proclamation issued, and the reward offered for the apprehension of Kingberring, declare that they had instructed the magistrate, in event of the Burmese chiefs in Arracan demanding the surrender of Kingberring, to inform them "*that specific instructions had been transmitted to the British envoy at Rangoon, in order to enable him to adjust the question of the surrender of the fugitive chiefs.*" Now, which of the two are we to believe? Is it not clear that a deliberate lie was put into the mouth of the magistrate?

On the 31st of July two officers of rank arrived at Rangoon from Ammerapura, conveying the fifth order from the Court of Ava for the transmission of the envoy to the capital. These

officers waited upon Captain Canning with a letter from the Engy Praw pressing his visit to the court. The deputies with very great caution acquainted the envoy that the king had removed the viceroy;—and they expressed the communication to be made in great secrecy to the envoy, as they had not as then deemed it expedient to communicate the information to the viceroy. The envoy enquired if they had heard of the attempt that had been made on the part of the viceroy to seize his person? The deputies replied that they had heard that the envoy being anxious to proceed to the capital, before the receipt of orders to that effect, the viceroy had ordered the gates of the town to be closed to prevent him carrying his design into execution: and that was one part of the viceroy's conduct which induced the Engy Praw to supersede him. The deputies then endeavoured to persuade the envoy to delay his departure to Bengal; and were surprised and concerned when they discovered that the envoy would not proceed to Ammerapora.

Subsequent to the deputies visit the envoy ascertained that the Engy Praw, at the command of the king, had transmitted most positive orders to the viceroy to send him and his interpreter to Ammerapora by persuasive means, but in event of failure to use force. Captain Canning had also learned that when the orders were commu-

nicated to the viceroy, he had declared to the other members of the government that the attempt to seize the envoy and individuals of the mission would be attended with so much danger he would not attempt the execution of it, but would dismiss them with every mark of friendship, and take upon himself the whole responsibility of the proceeding; the propriety of which measure the other members of the Rangoon Government entirely concurred.

On the 11th of August Captain Canning paid his last visit to the viceroy—taking with him a strong escort to prevent treachery, and to defeat any open efforts that might be made to detain him; but no such attempt however was made. After some friendly conversation, Captain Canning apprised the viceroy that he was acquainted with the orders brought by the deputies, and he stated that as a mark of confidence he expected an account of them from the viceroy himself. The viceroy acknowledged the accuracy of the information, and admitted that the orders even went so far as to authorise the imposition of manacles on Captain Canning and the head interpreter. The viceroy, however, repeated his conviction of the folly of any such attempt, and declared his resolution to maintain his promise of abstaining from any act of violence. The envoy having made the necessary arrangements, immediately sailed for Bengal.

To return to the proceedings on the Chittagong frontier. When every effort on the part of the Mughhs to possess themselves of Arracan had failed, Kingberring emerged from his concealment in the hills, and with many of his followers began committing various depredations in the southern part of the province of Chittagong; and on one occasion they plundered and burned the village of Moruntwanga. Measures were taken to endeavour to effect their apprehension; but the exertions of both the civil and military powers failed. In October Kingberring increased in the audacity of his depredations so much so, that the movements of the numerous bodies of armed Mughhs about the province compelled the native civil officers and the police to quit their stations. Several skirmishes took place between parties of the Mughhs and the Company's sepoy, on which occasions many of the former were killed, and others taken prisoners.

The magistrate of Chittagong receiving information that a body of Mughhs, at Cox's Bazaar, were meditating the project of joining Kingberring, endeavoured to effect the seizure of their persons by the most unwarrantable and disgraceful stratagem. The magistrate issued orders to the native officer commanding the detachment stationed in the neighbourhood of Cox's Bazaar, to invite the Mugh chiefs to an amicable conference with him and the chief civil officers, for

the "ostensible purpose of hearing a proclamation read which had lately been issued by the government, but with the real design of seizing their persons."

That any British subject, still less a magistrate, should have devised such a proceeding, must be a matter of surprise and regret to every Englishman. An insidious practice, alone fit for rude and barbarous states, and which every civilized nation on the face of the earth would contemplate with sentiments of detestation and horror. Indeed even the Government of India, who, on most occasions are not over nice, appear to have viewed it with disgust; for when reporting the transaction to the Court of Directors, in their despatch of the 21st of August, 1812, they thus notice it:

"We could not express in terms too forcibly our utter disapprobation of a system of proceeding so adverse to the principles of a British administration; so injurious to the British character, and so inconsistent with the maxims of public faith and honour, that to entice persons under a mask of amity, and consequently under an implied pledge of security, to meet the officers of government with the deliberate intention of seizing them, was a proceeding that no degree of *guilt* on their part, no consideration of expediency, advantage, or security, on the part of government could justify."

Happily an accidental delay in the Subedar (native officer) receiving the orders of the magistrate, allowed an opportunity for their revocation, and by these means was prevented an

occurrence that would have been productive of an accumulation of evils, the inevitable consequence of its execution, that would have extended far beyond the degradation of the British character.

Kingberring however having possessed himself entirely of the hills and jungle below Cox's Bazaar, towards the end of October, 1812, again began collecting his followers, carrying off by force other Mugh inhabitants, for the purpose of making another descent upon Arracan.

To surpress the depredations the insurgents were committing within the British territories, as well as to frustrate their contemplated designs of fresh attacks upon the province of Arracan, troops were for the fourth time advanced to Ramoo—and reinforcements sent to Chittagong.

About the middle of November, 1812, an affray took place at Cox's Bazar between a party of the British troops under the command of Lieutenant Young of the 12 native infantry, and the insurgents commanded in person by Kingberring. The insurgents were defeated, but Kingberring with about one thousand of his followers escaped; leaving behind him a number of boats and stores.

Towards the end of December, 1812, Kingberring made his third descent upon the province of Arracan; and stockaded himself at a place called Mangalla-gheere. In January he was attacked by a Burmese force, defeated, his stock-

ade destroyed, himself and followers pursued by the Burmese troops into the Company's territories, whence they had again flown for refuge.

The magistrate of Chittagong on this occasion by order of the Government of Calcutta, addressed a letter to the Rajah of Arracan remonstrating in the strongest terms against the unjustifiable violation of the British territory by the advance of the Burmese troops into the Chittagong district—calling upon him not only to issue immediate orders to the advanced parties to withdraw, but to retire himself with the force under his command from the frontier of Arracan. Finally signifying to him, that his continuing to menace and execute similar acts of aggression, would be considered as an indication on his part that the two countries were no longer at peace.

Previous however to the magistrate receiving the foregoing instructions from the Calcutta Government, he had received information that the Burmese troops who had entered the Chittagong district had retired:—he had also received a letter from the Rajah of Arracan couched in the most civil and friendly terms, disavowing the act of the Burmese troops as having been with his knowledge—further stating that he had punished the leaders:—and the Rajah concluded by requesting that the British Government would co-operate with him and his people, to endeavour to effect the seizure of the insurgent chiefs.

The mild, forbearing, and friendly disposition of

the Burmese authorities on the frontier, was here again manifest. But how did the magistrate of Chittagong act? Why, instead of sending a suitable reply, he forwards to the Rajah the irritating and mandatory letter directed by the government, alone applicable under other than existing circumstances, calculated to encrease difficulties, and to impress the Burmese with no very favourable opinion of the sincerity of the former friendly and amicable professions of the British Government.

Reviewing the whole of the conduct of the magistrate of Chittagong throughout these proceedings, and the incapacity he had shown to discharge with zeal, propriety, and judgment, the arduous functions of his office, it is surprising how the Government of Bengal should have continued him in a situation he was so little qualified to discharge with credit to himself, or regard to the honour and interests of his employers;—a situation in which he had shown that no experience would instruct, no practice could qualify him, or discretion regulate his actions. With such political agents as these, it can only be a matter of surprise how it happened that the Indian Government so long escaped being involved in an open rupture with the state of Ava.*

* The arduous and bloody conflict with the state of Napaul, in 1814 and 1815, was accelerated by the presumption and folly of one of these political agents. An ambassador had

The Rajah of Arracan acknowledged, with great civility, the extraordinary letter of the magistrate; but, he still continued to renew his request for the surrender of the Mugh rebel chiefs.

Notwithstanding the pacific and conciliatory tone of the letter of the Rajah of Arracan, from intelligence that reached Calcutta it appeared that preparations were making in Arracan for sending a large army to the frontier of that province. The consequence, of course, of the doubtful line of conduct that had been pursued towards them by the Indian Government. The Bengal Government therefore continued to forward reinforcements to Chittagong, and to strengthen the post of Ramoo.

crossed into the British frontier for the purpose of endeavouring to effect an amicable arrangement of the pending points in dispute between the two states; but how was he received? Why when he approached the tent of the British *political agent*, he was commanded to pull off his shoes before he entered. The ambassador very properly refused a compliance with the indignant demand, and remarked that it was a degradation he could not descend to. It was alone a mark of respect that inferiors of the lowest degree paid to superiors, and totally inconsistent with the dignity of his office. He remained at the door of the tent for an hour, and then retired to his court irritated and disgusted. The war broke out with savage ferocity. The political agent subsequently saw the evils he had brought upon mankind, and they had such an effect upon him, that he went out of his mind.

In consequence of the proclamations that had been issued, and the rewards offered for the apprehension of Kingberring and the leaders of the insurrection—several of the latter were taken during the months of February and March: and it was expected that this circumstance would have had the effect of destroying Kingberring's hopes of success from any further attempt upon Arracan.

In April, 1813, consonant with the invitation of the British envoy, a political mission arrived in Calcutta from Rangoon, making a formal demand on the part of the Burmese Government for the surrender of Kingberring and other insurgents, the deputies stating that the object of the King of Ava, in demanding their surrender, was not to inflict punishment on them, but merely to keep them in the power of the Burmese Government, so as to prevent them from engaging in further attempts to subvert his Burmese Majesty's authority in Arracan.

In reply to this demand on the part of the King of Ava, the government stated:—

“It must be obvious to the viceroy's mind, that with every desire to gratify his excellency's wishes, the measures of the British Government must be regulated by those maxims and principles on which its institutions, laws, and usages are founded. It would be contrary to these principles, his lordship observed, to surrender to a foreign state persons who, being settled in the territories of the British Government, had become its subjects, and whose offences against that government, amongst which was the disturbance of the peace of other states, were properly cog-

nizable only by its own institutions. His lordship expressed his persuasion, therefore, that the viceroy would perceive and acknowledge the justice of the grounds on which, this government felt it to be its duty to decline surrendering the persons of those of the rebel Mugh chiefs who were in the custody of the British Government, assuring the viceroy at the same time of the determination, dictated no less by the interests of the British Government than by its friendship for the Burmese state, to keep them in the most strict confinement, as well as to exert every effort to seize the persons of those who were still at large, and to prevent the renewal of those practices which had disturbed the tranquility of the frontier, and hazarded the interruption of the friendship between the two states."

This fine manual of moral and political duty reads well; and it would have been to the credit of the Indian Government, had they but practised it. The sequel, however, will prove that they could not, and that the whole line of their conduct towards the Burman Court, has been at the best but very doubtful; evincing as much political juggling as could well be played off by any government on earth.

Although many of the Mugh insurgents had been captured by the British authorities, still Kingberring contrived to evade them, and continued to lurk in the hills in the vicinity of Ramoo and Cox's Bazaar; while the Mughhs who had fled with him from Arracan lived by a system of plundering the inhabitants of the plains, in the manner of Dakaits, or Banditties, attacking the houses of the inhabitants in armed bodies of forty

or fifty, and again retiring with their booty into the fastnesses in the hills where all trace of them was lost.

A pretty situation for a fertile province, by neglect and bad management to be reduced to.

Towards the end of August, 1813, Kingberring had the audacity to address a letter to the commanding officer of the Post of Ramoo, avowing his intentions of again invading Arracan, and *desiring* the British Government *might not interpose* to prevent the prosecution of his designs, as they were not directed against their interests.

The Government of Bengal had by this time discovered that by the resolution they had formed not to deliver Kingberring and his associates into the hands of the Burmese, it had not only encouraged them to persevere in their schemes of conquest, but had made them audacious.

The government, therefore, at last, feeling *satisfied* of the criminal nature of the conduct of Kingberring and his followers, of the absolute necessity of relieving their subjects from the evils to which they were continually exposed, by the repeated enterprises of Kingberring, and to avert the extremity of a war with the Burmese, the probable consequences of a renewal of depredations in Arracan, directed the magistrate to announce to him their resolution, if he renewed his attempts upon Arracan, and should after fall into their hands, to deliver him up to the Burmese.

The letter which Kingberring addressed to the officer commanding the troops at Ramoo was forwarded by the magistrate of Chittagong to the Rajah of Arracan, for the purpose of apprising him of Kingberring's intentions, and to *demonstrate* the sincerity of the declarations of the British Government as to their entire disapproval and disconnection with the previous proceedings of Kingberring and his associates.

Notwithstanding the prohibition which the Rajah of Arracan stated he had issued to the Burmese troops, not to enter the British territories, early in January, 1814, a party of three hundred did so, plundered the village of Gunguneeah and carried off four of the inhabitants of that place.

In February, 1814, that is after the Mughls had for four successive years been carrying on their lawless practices in Arracan, and setting the British authority at defiance even in their own territories, the Government of Bengal directed the magistrate of Chittagong to declare to the Burmese authorities in Arracan, their utter incapacity to seize Kingberring, or to clear the hills of his people:—and, therefore, to *invite* the Burmese troops to enter the hills in the province of Chittagong to capture and disperse the Mugh insurgents. A pretty situation for a government to be reduced to, to make such an acknowledgment.

The Rajah of Arracan, however, was cautious, he suspected treachery, and therefore declined

the invitation: but did not fail to renew his demand for the surrender of Kingberring and his chiefs. The Rajah's patience was exhausted, and he forgot himself, for he went so far as to confine the messenger who conveyed the magistrate's letter, for a period of twenty days.

The Government of Bengal in their despatch to the Court of Directors of the 5th of February, 1814, thus account for the 'perseverance and resistance of the Mughs:—

“ Mr. Pechell (the magistrate) observed that it had been suggested to him at different times, and from a consideration of all the events of the last two years, he was himself strongly inclined to believe it, that the Mughs despaired of regaining Arracan by their own means, but that their object was, by working upon the unreasonable jealousies and arrogance of the Ava Government, by a continuance of their periodical incursions into Arracan, ultimately to embroil the British Government in a war with the state of Ava, the consequence of which might possibly be the expulsion of the Burmese by the British power, and the re-establishment of themselves in Arracan under a government of their own.” *

Early in April, 1814, Kingberring made his fourth descent on Arracan, and was met on the frontiers by a Burmese force, who attacked and routed him. The Burmese pursued the fugitives into the province of Chittagong; where they began stockading themselves, and only desisted and retired upon the advance of some British

* This has actually taken place in 1826.

troops : then not, however, until they had murdered two un-offending Mughhs while engaged in the peaceable occupation of husbandry.

In March, 1815, two Burmese envoys arrived in Calcutta from the Rajah of Arracan, complaining of the conduct of the British officers protecting the insurgents from interested motives, and demanding their of surrender.

The Government of Bengal in reply vindicated the Company's officers from the charge of corrupt conduct, and assured the Rajah that no means had been, or should be neglected in order to apprehend those Mughhs who continued their lawless course of life.

After his failure in April, 1814, Kingberring, deserted by most of his followers, continued a fugitive in the province of Chittagong, until April 1815, when he died. This circumstance produced a favourable change in the state of affairs, by its being followed by the dispersion of Kingberring's followers, and the restoration of tranquility on the frontier.

Unfortunately, however, in October, 1815, the peace of the district was again disturbed by one of the adherents of the late Kingberring, by name Rynjunzing, who having collected a large body of Mughhs in the hills, resumed their lawless practices of plundering the villages on the frontier, and then retiring to the hills. This course Rynjunzing pursued until the month of May, 1816,

bidding defiance to the civil power or the troops of the Company, until compelled by want and distress he at last surrendered himself into the hands of the magistrate of Chittagong; by which means he saved his life.

In 1817, the Mugh refugees still continued committing their depredations on the province of Arracan; and a most daring robbery was committed at this period in that country by a notorious leader of the insurgents by name Cheripo. On his return into the Company's province he was seized with a number of his followers by the magistrate of Chittagong; who recommended that, with some of his most guilty associates, Cheripo should be delivered over to the Burmese Government as the only measure which could deter others from similar proceedings.

The Government of Bengal declined a compliance with the suggestions of the magistrate as "it would be repugnant to the merciful character of the British nation, to expose so many persons to the vindictive resentment of their enemies, exasperated as they justly were by repeated aggressions." Again it "would constitute an encouragement to a repetition of demands on the part of the Burmese authorities for the surrender of fugitives, (a genteel appellation to give to robbers and murderers) and form a *precedent*, which on such occasions, would create a considerable degree of embarrassment.

Cheripo was accordingly set at large. This speaks volumes for the "*principles of public law and justice*" upon which the Indian Government act. The facts are too barefaced and abominable to require comment. The readers patience must be exhausted in contemplating such conduct of their countrymen in those distant regions—and the cant and hypocrisy with which, on all occasions, they preach about "*the merciful character of the British nation*" and "*doing outrage to their feelings.*" It must be remembered that at the very moment, 1817, when the British Government were harbouring these lawless ruffians and freebooters (the Mugh insurgents) they were denouncing vengeance upon all the states on their borders, friends and foes, who had either harboured the Pindarees or permitted them to pass through their provinces (which, by the bye, some had not the means, or the power of preventing if ever so much disposed) to those of the Company. Yes, at this moment thirty thousand British troops were in motion upon central India, for the purpose of extirpating that "*great scourge and pest to mankind*" the Pindares: and the British cannon were thundering against the walls of the palaces of some of the Indian Princes, for real or *imaginary* conspiracies; and for the purpose, as it was said, of establishing a permanent peace, and ensuring security to the peasant.

When the government were talking about

establishing "*precedents*" by giving up the notorious culprit Cheripo, which would "*on such occasions create considerable embarrassment,*" they seemed to have contemplated a repetition, as well as having evinced no desire to check the evils. How strangely ignorant must the government of 1817, have been of the events of preceding years. Had not Lord Tingmouth in 1794, established a "*precedent*" by surrendering the three culprits to the Burmese? What embarrassment had this produced?—None. On the contrary, the surrender of those delinquents had restored peace and harmony; and we find the Mughls conducting themselves tolerably well until the year 1811—but from the moment they obtained protection after their flight from Arracan, they never ceased renewing their depredations until the two states were involved in open war. But this is what the Indian Government were seeking, and were resolved upon.

It must not be supposed because the East India Directors have not been introduced throughout the preceding pages, that during the progress of the events which have been narrated they were silent spectators and took no part. It would indeed be a pity to neglect to record that which they did. In their despatch to the Government of Bengal, dated from their imperial palace in Leadenhall Street on the 19th of May 1815, after approving of the conduct of, and

measures adopted by the Bengal Government, they expressed themselves rather *disposed* to go to war, *than to surrender* the insurgent chiefs; and they hoped that Kingberring had not been given up to avoid it.

But this resolution of the East India Directors was a matter of course, and not to be wondered at. They are neither statesmen or generals. They acted on the occasion as merchants would do, looking to the probable prospect, in the event of a war, to extend their trade, to discover new markets, and expand their possessions. In the deliberations which produced the resolution, there was no reference to those great and general principles of political policy and justice which statesmen would look to, and their conduct be regulated by. Can it be a matter of much surprise, the indifference with which they spoke of going to war. There were none of them who had ever witnessed the horrors of war—they had suddenly jumped from behind the desk of a counting-house, or retired from a life of indolence and luxury in a civil office in India, to become legislators. The destruction possibly of fifty thousand of the human species, and the shedding of torrents of blood, was to them a matter of little import in the way of business—the misery and affliction it would bring upon mankind would not be felt in Leadenhall Street, there

was no chance of their eyes being there offended with the scenes of carnage—or their ears assailed by the cries of the widow and the orphan bemoaning the loss of a husband or parent—or could the voice of the husbandman be heard deploring the loss of his flock, and the desolation spread over his once flourishing and fertile fields. Against these evils it would almost appear the East India Directors were regardless, and that their hearts were clad in steel.

They only looked for the establishment of their absolute power, the increase of their revenue, and extension of domain. The day of reckoning was too far off, perhaps never, when the merit of these transactions should come to be fairly discussed by a British public. Ex-parte statements had hitherto sufficed on most occasions, and might now have answered the purpose *of some* better. But when the evils had gone so far that war was sooner or later inevitable, the Directors seemed to have repented of their former determination, and they came to the resolution, in their despatch of the 4th of November, 1821, to desire the Government of Bengal, when any of the Mugh offenders should be apprehended that they should be given over to the Burmese.

In May, 1817, the son of the Rajah of Ramree arrived at Chittagong with a letter from his father, the Governor of the Burmese, frontier

provinces, containing a demand for the surrender of the Mugh emigrants. In it he observed :—

“ The English Government does not try to preserve friendship. You seek for a state of affairs like fire and gunpowder. The Mughs of Arracan are the slaves of the King of Ava. The English Government has assisted the Mughs of our four provinces, and has given them a residence.—There will be a quarrel between us and you, like fire.—Formerly the Government of Arracan demanded the Mughs from the British Government, which promised to restore them ; but at length did not do so.—Again the Mughs escaped from your hands, came and despoiled the four provinces, and went and received protection in your country. If at this time you do not restore them according to demand, or make delays in doing so, the friendship now subsisting between us will be broken.”

It will be perceived from the foregoing letter, that the Burmese although patient never gave up their intention of claiming the delivery of the insurgents.

Upon the magistrate of Chittagong endeavouring to ascertain the cause of the renewal of the demand by the Rajah of Ramree for the surrender of the fugitives, he was informed “ the letter had been written by the express commands of the King of Ava, who was convinced that the Mughs would, notwithstanding Kingberring was dead, take every opportunity that presented itself of renewing the troubles, and over-running and endeavouring to re-conquer Arracan, and its dependencies ; and the King

was satisfied that the tranquility of the frontier could never be reckoned on for any length of time, unless the Mughs were delivered up."

The British Government, in answer to the demand of the Rajah of Ramree, declined a compliance with the demand, as they stated—"they could not, without a violation of the *principles of justice on which it invariably acts!* deliver up a body of people who had sought its protection." And they further observed, "that no restraint would be exercised for the purpose of effecting their removal from the British territories." The Governor-General at the same time addressed a letter to the same effect to the Viceroy of Pegue, assuring him that the vigilance of the British officers would be continued and that any persons who might engage in criminal enterprises would be punished with the utmost severity.

From this it would appear that the Government of Bengal had determined, at last, to interfere with the Mugh insurgents; but the cause of action must be explained. The magistrate of Chittagong had reported to the government that preparations were in progress in Arracan, indicative of a design to attempt the seizure of the Mughs by force. Although it is clear, from the previous despatches of the Bengal Government, that they had for some time "*contemplated the expediency,*" or "*policy,*" of a war with the Burmese, they were too much engaged

in a fardistant quarter of their possessions, to admit of the chance of a rupture at that moment; and they, therefore, issued a proclamation to the Mughls, declaring their resolution, "in event of any more such acts of depredation occurring, the perpetrators should be delivered to the officers of Arracan to be dealt with as they thought fit."

But here again the same careless and negligent way with which affairs are transacted in India was put into practice; and as at that time I had some share in the transaction, I must again intrude myself on the attention of my readers.

The following letter which I addressed to the Adjutant-General, will make the reader acquainted with the subject :

To Colonel Nicol.

Sir,

Observing the movement of troops towards the frontier of Chittagong, has induced me to venture, respectfully, to address you for the information of The Most Noble the Commander-in-Chief, considering it to be the duty of every individual whose local residence may have given him opportunities of observing circumstances that might benefit the state, to submit them to the consideration of authority.

In the month of May, 1811, I marched with a detachment from Chittagong to Ramoo, the period of the celebrated Mugh rebel Kingberring's first invasion of Arracan. Circumstances rendered it necessary, notwithstanding the rains had set in, that the detachment should proceed to the Nauf river. The distress occasioned by the season, no provisions but what was precari-

ously obtained, the inhabitants of Teck Nauf having fled, our tents having been destroyed by gales prior to leaving Ramoo, exposed alternately to the rain and sun by day, and no shelter at night, reduced the detachment so much by sickness as to render its re-call absolutely necessary in July. The loss it sustained was about three-fourths of its numbers. In the cold season of the same year, I again proceeded with the force under the late Lieutenant-Colonel Morgan. During these periods I had an opportunity of viewing the natural strength of the country to the confines of the Company's provinces to the southward, and obtaining information not to be acquired but by personal research. Under these circumstances I trust it will not appear presumptuous in a young officer submitting his observations for consideration.

From the lamentable proofs there have been of the inability of the native troops of the upper provinces, or even those of Chittagong, to endure the climate of Ramoo, Teck Nauf, Cox's Bazaar, &c. &c. it has often occurred to me the advantage that would arise by forming a strong battalion of Mughls for the duty of that frontier, and which would effectually secure the province. To the absence of troops on this frontier may be attributed the cause of the Mughls forming plans, assembling forces at Hurvung and Cox's Bazaar, and many other populous towns, for the invasion of Arracan.

The Nauf river, the southern boundary of our provinces, from its extreme breadth precludes the possibility of any force of Burmahs crossing without timely notice. From the point at Teck Nauf to the foot of the hills, may be, at the utmost, seven or eight miles. The depths of these hills are unfathomable, covered with impenetrable jungle, forming of themselves an effectual barrier, unless at one point, Otea Ghaut. This being occupied, renders the passing in or out of the Company's provinces impossible, unless at Teck Nauf, or by sea. The plain at Teck Nauf is high, the jungle but partial; while its distance from the hills and vicinity to the sea, renders

it by far the most healthy and desirable part of the province south of Chittagong.

The post of Ramoo by no means secures the province ; on the contrary, the space from thence to Teck Nauf, nearly one hundred miles, is entirely open to the Burmahs ; who, if disposed to molest the province, by occupying the hills, stockading themselves, as in General Erskine's time, might defy any army : a matter of consideration when our troops can keep the field but during the cold season.

The Mughs are remarkable for their symmetry of form, their athletic power, and hardiness. Their gallantry and enterprising spirit is well known ; and no doubt, if organized, they would prove as good soldiers as any we have.

The object of raising a battalion on this frontier, would be effectually to prevent the Mughs proceeding out of the province to Arracan ; and which I apprehend has been the cause of the various advances of the Burmese troops towards the Company's provinces. The reason when explained to the Burmese would no doubt be gratifying ; evincing to them that the outrages formerly committed by the Mughs were not countenanced by the British Government, and also demonstrate their desire to prevent a repetition. It would also obviate the necessity for any troops at Ramoo of the regulars, or of the provincials, who might be reduced (1600), being troops perfectly inadequate to cope with the Burmese, and in time of danger useless but for the protection of cutcheries (town halls), jails, &c. &c. By this means the whole province would be secured ; and in event of any circumstances occurring to cause an invasion of Arracan, they would be found invaluable from their knowledge of the country and the excessive fatigue they will undergo.

I would suggest the propriety, should the formation of such a corps be deemed expedient of stationing the Mugh battalion at Teck Nauf.

I have ventured to express these remarks from a knowledge that none of the commanding officers who have at various times

commanded the province have themselves ventured beyond Ramoo or Cox's Bazaar. The natural strength of the post of Teck Nauf could not therefore have come under their personal observation. As no detachment had ever been down to Teck Nauf prior to that I proceeded with, and none since Colonel Morgan's command, it is probable it has never before been suggested to the government the importance of the situation, and that *the security of the province* greatly depends upon a line of posts situated there.

I am well aware that the unhealthiness of the district south of Chittagong will be deemed by many an insurmountable bar. The secluded and remote situation from the Residency may even be the cause of urging, in a great measure its incapacity, multiplying difficulties and dangers; the greater part of which might be obviated with care and industry.

From an anxious desire not to encroach too much upon your time and notice a subject that may not be required, I confine myself to the few remarks made. With the greatest respect,

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Moorshedabad,
July, 25, 1817.

Your most obedient Servant,
W. WHITE.

In reply to the foregoing letter, I received the following from the Adjutant-General.

No. 122.

To Lieutenant White,

*Commanding Moorshedabad Provincial
Battalion.*

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th ultimo, which I did not fail to lay

before His Excellency the most Noble the Commander-in-Chief.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Head-quarters on the River,

near Bharr,

6th of August, 1817.

JAMES NICOL,

Adj.-Gen. of the Army.

To demonstrate the correctness as well as the importance of the suggestions contained in my letter to the Adjutant-General, it will be requisite to advert to the events which took place at Ramoo, in May, 1824.

The following is from the Times of the 12th of October, 1824 :—

“ The disaster at Ramoo is thus related in a letter from an officer, dated Chittagong, May 25th :—

“ Some days previous to the 9th inst. Captain Noton, commanding the detachment at Ramoo, learnt that one hundred and fifty of the enemy had been seen cutting a road for their advance within four miles of the stockade at Rutnapullung. On the 9th, positive information was brought to Captain Noton, stating that the enemy had arrived at Rutnapullung, and surrounded it ; a Naick of the provincials was sent into Ramoo immediately, by the Jemedar on duty at the stockade, stating that the Burmah Suidars were having a conference with him ; they informed our men that they did not come to fight nor with any hostile intentions, but merely wished to speak to the English. Under these circumstances Captain Noton (justly supposing that the intention of the enemy was merely to take the Jemedar by surprise, and get possession of the stockade) advanced with the whole of his disposable force, consisting of three companies of the 23d, and

leaving some of the Mugh levy at Ramoo, for the protection of the sick, &c.

“About a mile from the stockade, the enemy suddenly commenced a heavy fire upon our column, from a thick jungle; this was abandoned about ten o’clock at night. Captain Noton returned to bring on our two six-pounders, which were on elephants a little in the rear, directing Ensign Campbell to advance with the three companies. Ensign Campbell advanced, and kept up a brisk fire upon the enemy for a considerable time, until they attempted to cut off the guns, when he fired a volley, and charged them with the bayonet; they being at that time at the mouth of the jungle; in this change they were completely routed, and forty of them killed; our detachment had a havildar and six sepoy killed, and nine wounded. Ensigns Campbell and Bennett were likewise wounded.

“Frightened at the firing, the elephants had thrown their loads, and the guns were rendered useless; the detachment, however, completely succeeded in clearing the jungle of the rascals, although there could not have been less than two thousand of them; thus we succeeded in defeating them; and had we had a couple of companies to spare to have followed them up, we should not since have been so much annoyed with them. The firing ceased at half-past one in the morning; we then took up a position on the plain, bringing with us the guns, and all the ammunition that had been thrown by the elephants. After a consultation amongst the officers, it was agreed to return to Ramoo, and get possession of our magazine and public stores. The detachment accordingly returned. On arriving at Ramoo, it was found that the Jemedar, who had charge of the Rutnapullung stockade, had returned, and we have reason to believe without firing a shot, as he brought with him the whole of his ammunition, and not a man hurt. Captain Noton, on his immediate return to Ramoo, wrote off express to Chittagong for reinforcements. All was now pretty quiet, until the 13th, when the enemy advanced, in number, it is supposed, about

ten thousand, on Ramoo, from the Rutnapullung road, and intrenched themselves on the south side of the river. On the following day they advanced to the river, and a party was immediately detached, with the two six-pounders, (under Lieutenant Scott, of the artillery,) under Captain Trueman, of the 20th, who succeeded in driving them from their position into the surrounding hills; a good number of them were killed by our grape and shells, but none of our men hurt.

"On the 15th they again advanced, and commenced intrenching themselves within about three hundred yards of our position, which was strengthened to the rear by the river, on the right by the river and a large tank occupied by our piquet, about sixty yards in advance; and our left flank was strengthened by a similar tank, occupied by a strong party of provincials and Mughls. On the 16th, it was found that the enemy had considerably advanced their trenches; on the 17th, they had advanced their trenches to within twelve paces of the two tanks, and gained possession of the one on our left flank, defended by the provincials and Mughls, who quitted their post, and fled with precipitation.

"We gave up all hopes of reinforcements; and our flank being now undefended, our detachment knocked up for want of food and rest, and totally incapable of making any effectual resistance, Captain Noton being obliged to abandon the guns, and, having no means of spiking them, ordered a retreat, which was effected in good order, keeping up a fire for half a mile, when we came to a river—the immense numbers of the enemy pouring in on us in all directions, and their cavalry pressing hard—individual safety became necessary, and every man saved himself the best way he could; the men are not to be blamed for this, for had they remained, they were so fatigued, and their numbers so few, that further resistance would have been useless. The enemy now seemed to make a determined rush upon the Europeans—poor Noton was killed in a personal engagement with one of their horsemen, and they both fell together. Cap-

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tain Trueman, of the 20th, killed by a spearsman; Lieutenant Grigg, of the 23rd; Captain Pringle, commanding the Mugh levy; Dr. Maysmore, of the 23rd; and Ensign Bennett, in attempting to cross the river; Lieutenant Scott, of the artillery, who had been severely wounded on the 16th, had been previously tied to an elephant, and escaped. Ensign Campbell made his escape by swimming the river, and, while swimming on his back, taking off his clothes under water, to prevent being shot. Ensign Codrington escaped on horseback, to Cox's Bazaar, closely pursued; he would not have escaped, had it not been for the quality of his horse."

From this statement it appears the approach into the province of Chittagong by the pass of Otea Ghaut was so difficult and so bad that these "*barbarians*," the Burmese, were obliged to cut a road for their advance—and that the party only consisted of one hundred and fifty men. These no doubt had been sent as pioneers, to clear the way.

It will have been observed that in my letter to the Adjutant-General, I strongly urged the importance of the pass of Otea Ghaut, as also of the post of Teck Nauf, as effectually securing the province of Chittagong from invasion while the post of Ramoo would not. In 1812, when affairs by no means assumed the serious aspect which they did in the year 1824. Colonel Morgan occupied the pass of Otea Ghaut with his light company—Teck Nauf with his grenadiers and a battalion company—and the post of Rutnapullung with eighty men. But in May, 1824, after war

had been proclaimed, an expedition had sailed to Rangoon, and it was known that the Burmese armies were advancing avowedly for the purpose of invading the Company's territories, neither Otea Ghaut or Teck Nauf was occupied—and only a detachment of twenty sepoy's stationed at Rutnapullung, and those composed of the Chittagong provincial battalion. The consequence of this neglect to take advantage of the natural strength of the frontier was, the Burmese entered by the pass of Otea Ghaut without opposition; at which post the most determined resistance ought to have been made, and might effectually have been done by a small detachment; they advanced upon Rutnapullung, which was immediately abandoned, and they established themselves, to the number of ten thousand, on the plains of Ramoo.

It is very clear that the unfortunate calamity which befel the detachment, was partly owing to the neglect to occupy the pass—the small force on the frontier, and the employment of men upon duties they were perfectly unfit for.

In my letter to the Adjutant-General I pronounced the provincial battalion of Chittagong to be “troops perfectly inadequate to cope with the Burmese, and in time of danger useless, but for the protection of jails, &c. &c.” The provincials had charge of the Rutnapullung stockade, which they abandoned the moment the Burmese ad-

vanced without firing a shot. At Ramoo they defended the left of the line, and there again "*they quitted their post and fled with precipitation.*" The result was, the detachment was obliged to retire, and in their retreat they were cut to pieces.*

It will have been observed that I recommended, for more reasons than one, the training of the Mughls to arms. Lord Hastings either did not

* A very injudicious practice has too often prevailed in India of posting small detachments to impede the movements of formidable armies, so far in advance from the head-quarters of the division as to preclude the possibility of their receiving timely reinforcement if attacked ; a practice that from the train of evil consequences it has produced, loudly calls for the intervention of authority, as heedlessly and unnecessarily exposing the lives of the troops, and injurious to the interest of the service, by cutting up their forces in detail, damping the spirit of their men, and encouraging an enemy to advance from the prospect of an easy triumph.

After hostilities had commenced with the state of Napaul, General Marley advanced two detachments to the distance of between twenty and thirty miles from his head-quarters. One from the second battalion 15th regiment of three hundred and seventy men to a place called Pursa-gurry, on the borders of the great Saul Forest ; the other of about two hundred and fifty men from the 22nd native infantrymen to Summunpoore. These detachments were eighteen miles apart, and both in the enemies territory.

On the 1st of January, 1815, before day light, a simultaneous attack was made by the Napaulese upon both detachments---they fought gallantly for an hour and twenty minutes---had five officers killed, and three parts of their men ; but at length having expended all their ammunition they were obliged to retreat.

approve, or possibly take into consideration the suggestion. Lord Amherst, however, it appears, did so. But it was then too late to begin to train them at the moment they were to take the field. Much therefore could not be expected under such circumstances from them. Notwithstanding the affair at Ramoo, such was the estimation in which the Mughhs were held at Chittagong, in the same paper which announced the disaster at Ramoo, it was observed, "large bodies of Mughhs have arrived in the neighbourhood of Chittagong, whom the magistrate is endeavouring to settle in some convenient situation, their services being considered of the greatest use in the event of defensive operations, as little reliance could be placed on any other class of the inhabitants." Now the provincial battalion of Chittagong which I suggested to Lord Hastings the propriety of reducing, happened, instead of being reduced, to be augmented several hundred men by his Lordship—and they were nearly entirely natives of Chittagong; few of the natives of the upper provinces being induced, from the climate, to enter it.

To whom the blame should attach for the neglect to guard the frontier it is not for me to decide; but it must be a matter of surprise, after the repeated warnings the government appear to have had, that it should so have occurred; and what renders it more unaccountable, is the fact

that the Government of Bengal, in their despatch to the Court of Directors, of the 1st of August, 1812, declare "the only part of their territory, (alluding to the Chittagong frontier,) accessible to the Burmese might with ease be effectually protected." If so, was it not a shameful proceeding to have neglected doing it, and to allow of a Burmese army, variously rated at from twenty to fifty thousand men, to take quiet possession of the whole of the lower part of the province of Chittagong? But so it was; and what is more, the Burmese kept possession of it in defiance of the British Government, until the opening of 1825, when an army of twelve thousand men were assembled, partly from Madras, for the purpose of dispossessing them. But, from the trouble they were relieved in consequence of an order from the Court of Ava, for the Burmese to withdraw to the seat of war in Ava.

To return to the proceedings in the Chittagong district in May, 1817, previous to the breaking out of the war. After the government had made extensive arrangements to repel a threatened invasion from Arracan it turned out, "*that there was not the least reason to suspect the existence or the future contemplation of any hostile designs on the part of the Burmese Government.*"

In 1819, some disturbances occurred between the Burmese and other native powers, in a quarter far distant from Arracan; but contiguous to

the Company's north eastern possessions of Rungpore; and which it is necessary to detail.

The province of Assam had been for several years in a state of anarchy in consequence of two factions contending for sovereignty: the one in possession, the other, the competitor, supported by the Burman power. However, in June, 1819, the reigning Rajah Poorunder Singh, was driven from the capital—and his competitor Chunder Kaunt placed by the Burmese upon the Musnud, or Throne.*

* Assam “ consists for the most part of a long valley, about seventy miles in average breadth, and nearly seven hundred miles in length, divided through its whole extent by the Berhampootra into nearly equal parts. It is situated principally between the 25th and 28th parallels of N. latitude, and between 94° and 99° of East longitude, and contains probably an area of sixty thousand square miles. Every attempt to conquer this country had proved abortive, prior to the Burman invasion of 1819. Hossein Shah, Nabob of Bengal, once attempted it, but the rainy season intercepted his supplies, and all his army perished. Mahomaded Shah, Emperor of Hindostan, invaded Assam with one hundred thousand cavalry, and was never heard of more. The Emperor Aurungzeb was equally unsuccessful. His General, Mourzym Khan, penetrated as far as Gergong, the capital; but, when the rains began, the Assamese came out of their hiding-places, and harrassed the invaders, while sickness broke out and the flower of the army perished. The rest endeavoured to escape along the narrow causeways which have been formed over morasses, but few ever reached Bahar. After this expedition, the Mahommedans of Hindostan declared that Assam was inhabited only by infidels, hobgoblins, and devils. Yet in

On his discomfiture, the Rajah Poorunder Singh, with a number of the natives of Assam, took refuge in the Company's province of Rungpore. He had no sooner found an asylum there, than he applied to the British Government to afford him assistance in restoring him to the Musmad of his ancestors; offering to become tributary to the East India Company, and to pay the expences of the troops that might be required to effect his restoration.

The government declined the proposition, upon the plea of not wishing to interfere in the internal affairs of foreign states, nor to pronounce on disputed titles. But assured the refugees from Assam that an asylum should be afforded to them and protection also given so long as they should conduct themselves in a quiet and peaceable manner.

However it so happened with the Assamese refugees, as it had with the Mughls before, they could not be contented with the peaceable asylum the British Government had afforded them: but in a very short time they began committing depredations on the frontiers of Assam, and disturbing the peace of that district.

It has been the fashion, from time immemorial, for the Governors of the East India Company, spite of all obstacles, in 1817, the Birmans succeeded, under Minderagee-praw, in acquiring entire possession of the country.”
The Modern Traveller.

when it suited their purposes, to charge the native princes with being engaged in forming conspiracies against the English, for the subversion of their power and expulsion from India. That conspiracies of such a nature have at times, and in different parts of the Company's territories, taken place, is unquestionably true ; but it is greatly to be feared that the charge has also frequently been made, for the purpose of giving a colour to acts of violence and aggression. The statements which have mostly gone forth to the world regarding the policy pursued, and measures adopted by the Indian Government towards the native sovereigns and princes, has generally been ex-parte : and this ex-parte statement has been deemed sufficiently satisfactory, and upon it resolutions of approbation, votes of thanks, have from time to time, up to the present moment, been passed by the Proprietors of Stock, for attacking the possessions, capturing the provinces, reducing the power, and plundering the treasures of the native sovereigns.

From the tenor of Lord Hastings' despatch of March, 1820, I cannot help thinking that his Lordship in charging the Burmese with endeavouring to form conspiracies with other native powers for the expulsion of the English from India, has hazarded the opinion without a shadow of ground upon which it could be established. Nor can I help forming the inference that the

charge was made, solely for the purpose of creating an unfavourable impression in England against the Burmese, preparatory to the development of schemes of conquest held in view.

Lord Hastings in his despatch, after alluding to an absurd and extravagant demand that had been made in the year 1818, by the Court of Ava, for the cession of Ramoo, Chittagong, Dacca, and Moorshedabad, on the alledged ground of their being dependencies of the Burmese Government, observes :—

“There is no way of accounting for this extravagant step on the part of the Court of Ava, but by *supposing* it to have originated in a secret agreement with the Maharattas. The Governor of Merhege, a Burman chief of great eminence, had been permitted to visit the upper provinces for professed purposes connected with religion. There is reason to *surmise* that his real object was to ascertain the real strength and determination of the Maharattas, in consequence of previous overtures from them; and it is probable that he had adopted delusive notions of both. The King of Ava immediately after the transmission of the message, which was really a declaration of war, would learn that the views of his expected allies had been anticipated, and that the Maharattas were crushed. Thence his hostile intentions subsided without further explanation.”

The visit of the Burmese chief to the upper provinces, viz : , Benares, a place of religious resort, took place in 1813, and in the despatch of the Government of Bengal to the Court of Directors, of the 24th of June, 1813, alluding to the transaction they say, “we instructed the Persian

secretary to communicate to Captain Canning our free permission for the agent to proceed to Benares, and our resolution to provide him with a house and furniture during his stay at the Presidency."

The Government of Bengal in their despatch to the Court of Directors, of the 1st of October, 1813, thus notice the termination of the Burmans visit to Benares.

"With respect to the Burmese agent, who was deputed by the viceroy of Pegu for the ostensible purpose of purchasing religious writings at Benares, as reported to your Honourable Court in the 20th paragraph of our letter of the 24th of June instant, we have received notice from Captain Canning of his return to the Presidency, and have directed that officer to intimate to him that it is time for him to return to Ava, since the professed object of his journey has been accomplished. It appears that the agent, while at that city, made no attempt to obtain any sacred writings, but was engaged in secret conferences with some Bramins at that place, who carried on an intercourse with Ava, as we were of opinion that that intercourse could not be attended with any mischief, and as we had no means of convicting them of any traitorous correspondence, there being nothing against them but suspicions of a nature not sufficient to form the ground of a proceeding, we did not deem it necessary to institute any inquiry into the contemptible intrigues which the Burmese and their Bramin confederates might be carrying on."

We have here the candid acknowledgment of the government, that there was "*nothing against*" the Burman agent but suspicions of a nature not sufficient to form the ground of proceeding; or to

institute an inquiry into the *contemptible* intrigues which the Burmese and their Bramin confederates might have been carrying on. But Sir John Malcolm is more positive, and no doubt takes his key note from the Marquis of Hastings' summary of his own administration. Sir John adverting to the same transaction says positively the agent instead of purchasing religious books, spent his time in secret intrigues hostile to the British Government. If so, Sir John should have adduced the proof:—for assertion is no proof.

Sir John Malcolm and Lord Hastings seem to think that the commission to Benares to purchase sacred works of the Hindoos, and to collect manuscripts was solely a pretext, and the real object was the forming of a confederacy amongst the native powers to expel the English from India.

It may have been so ; but I cannot be persuaded myself to believe it, for the probability is in favour of the Burmese agent having been sent solely for the purpose avowed. The Burmans are of Hindoo extraction. The history of the Burmans, mythological and civil, is the same as that of the Hindoos ; their sacred language is the Pali, their religious faith is that of Mogo, or Maha-burma. The Pali is the vernacular dialect of southern Behar, or Benares ; and this was the kingdom of the great Mogo Rajah. Gayah,

the birth-place of Buddha, is in the province of Benares, and is still a place of pilgrimage for his votaries, though amongst the resident inhabitants very few Bouddhists are to be found, Braminical being the prevailing religion. This accounts for the repeated visits of the Burmans to the holy city of Benares. The Burmese also sent messengers to Ceylon, persons of learning and respectability, to procure the original books on which their tenets are founded. The Burmese acknowledging the superior antiquity of the Cingalese, and the reception of their laws and religion from that quarter.

The intolerant persecution of the Buddha Kings, and Bouddhists, by the Hindoo Kings, caused the Bouddhists to emigrate to the neighbouring countries. The emigrant tribes are stated to have wandered to the north-east of Bengal, and to have established separate principalities in those countries, extending themselves over the country to the confines of China, and descending the Irriwaddy, possessed themselves of the eastern coast, as far as Cape Negrois. The Mughls and Burmans are only different tribes of the same stock;—their religion is the same, and they speak the same language; indeed, it is said by some authorities, the Burmahs profess originally to have come from Arracan.

Upon a reference to the geographical situation of the two states, it would appear almost to pre-

clude the possibility of any such intrigue as that of a connection between the Maharattas and the Burmese ever having been on foot, and if this circumstance would not subvert the probability of the scheme, a reference to historical facts would.

Lord Hastings in his summary of his administration, observes,—“there were made over to me, when the reins were placed in my hands no less than six hostile discussions with native powers, each capable of resorting to arms. And he goes on to remark, “the sixth contention with Napaul remained for decision by arms. A struggle with the latter was unpromising. We were strangely ignorant of the country or its resources; so that overlooking the augmented abilities latterly furnished by science to a regular army for surmounting local obstacles, it was a received persuasion, that the nature of the mountains, which we should have to penetrate, would be as baffling to any exertions of ours, as it had been to all the efforts of many successive Mahomedon sovereigns; no option, however, remained with us.”

The period to which Lord Hastings refers is 1813,—the war against Napaul commenced in 1814.

The injuries which the states of Ava had sustained for a succession of years, particularly in 1811, and the depredations that were annually committed by the Mughls until 1815, have been

detailed. If the Burmese had been otherwise than friendly towards the British, there could not have been a more convenient opportunity, or so propitious a prospect from collision as that of a union of interests with the Napaulese in 1814 :— and of which the Burmese were not ignorant. But the fact turns out to be that the Burmese so far from seeking alliance with powers hostile towards the British power, then rejected all overtures made to them by the Napaulese, and which fact is established by a letter of intelligence from one of the British spies in Assam, to Mr. Scott, the civil commissioner in Rungpore, and received by Mr. Scott on the 15th of January, 1824.

“ At this moment sixty Burmahs, under the command of the Dekha Rajah, have arrived at Gawahatty. I have heard the Dekha Rajah say, that the English are without faith ; they do not understand what it is. When the Rajah Minghee Maha Iheluar intended to plunder Gaolparah, the Captain Sahib called him his father, and on that account the Rajah gave up his intention. At this time the English are collecting an army, and wish to invade us, The Rajah of Napaul sent people with a letter to the King of Ava, to attack the English, but at that time (1814) our king did not wish to fight with them. Well, we shall see in what manner the English will keep their country.”

It would appear very improbable that the Burmese Monarch had, in 1813, been engaged in intrigues with the Maharattas, for the expulsion

of the English, or he would not in 1814, have rejected those of the Nepaulese, which must have presented a far more likely chance of success. Of the previous overtures Lord Hastings mentions to have been made by the Maharattas to the Burmese ; when, where, and how they became known to his lordship, or of the nature of those overtures we are in total ignorance : I cannot trace them upon record, and his lordship has omitted to give the particulars of it himself.

To return to the disturbances in Assam. In July, 1820, Chunder Kaunt, the successful competitor, applied to the British Government for the seizure of the Ex-Rajah Poorunder Singh, his prime minister and followers.

About the same time, July, one of the ministers of the King of Ava addressed a letter to the Governor-General, stating the intervention of that state to support Chunder Kaunt, and to restore tranquillity in Assam, requesting that certain refugees who continued to disturb the peace on the frontier might be apprehended and delivered over to the officers of his Burmese Majesty.

The Governor-General, Lord Hastings, replied to the request in mild and complimentary terms, professing every disposition to promote the friendship and harmony subsisting between the two states ; but with respect to the demand for the persons who had been expelled from Assam, and

sought refuge within the British territories, he stated, that as long as they conducted themselves in a quiet and peaceable manner, he felt precluded from complying with the demands to apprehend and surrender them.

Rajah Chunder Kaunt soon growing tired of his allies the Burmese, and being desirous of getting rid of them, in April, 1843, began by taking the head off of the Bar-burwah, or Assamese Prime Minister, merely because he happened to be much attached to the interests of the Burmese.

The Ex-Rajah Poorunder Singh, who had for some time been employed in collecting troops in the Bhootan territories for the purpose of invading Assam, and which troops were to be commanded by an half-cast of the name of Bruce; in May, 1841, made an application to the British Government for the restoration of some arms that had been left in deposit at the period of the Assamese refugees taking the British protection. The Rajah also solicited permission to purchase arms from the arsenal at Fort William.

When the agent of the Governor-General, Mr. Scott, transmitted the application to the government, he strongly recommended a compliance with the requisition, being "*satisfied that all that was necessary to enable the Ex-Rajah Poorunder Singh to establish his authority was a supply of fire arms.*"

The government, however, declined furnishing the arms from the arsenal of Fort William, but they declared that “*they saw no objection to the refugees procuring muskets and stores by private means from their territories.*”

Towards the latter end of May, the Ex-Rajah Poorunder Singh entered Assam by the Bhootan territories. He was met by a party detached by Rajah Chunder Kaunt, his force defeated, and his commander, Mr. Bruce, made a prisoner of and sent to Gowahati.

In September, 1821, an army from Ava invaded Assam for the purpose of revenging the death of the Bar-burwah, or Prime Minister. Rajah Chunder Kaunt was soon defeated by the Burmese troops, driven from the capital, and obliged to fly to the Company's provinces for protection. The Burmese troops followed him beyond the confines of Assam, and they committed some outrages on the British frontier villages; which circumstance caused the advance of a small force of British troops to protect the Company's territory from further violation.

The commander of the Burmese forces, and the new Assamese minister who accompanied them, were called upon by the British Government to deliver up the perpetrators of the outrages:—but before the demand could have reached them, Mr. Scott, the Governor-General's agent, received a letter from the Burmese commander, stating, that “his soldiers had by mistake plun-

dered the villages of Habbraghat, within the British boundary, thinking that they belonged to Assam—that he had no intention of molesting the inhabitants of Bengal, and that he would afford satisfaction for whatever had occurred.”

The friendly disposition of the Burmese was here again apparent. They evidently wished to continue on terms of friendship and amity. But Lord Hastings did not seem to appreciate their conduct, or was he disposed to act in conformity with his declaration, *not “to interfere with the internal affairs of foreign states.”*

During the first years of Lord Hastings’ administration the Government of Bengal had been placed in a situation of great difficulty from the conduct of the Mughls, having by means derived from their territories repeatedly invaded Arracan. Lord Hastings landed in Calcutta towards the latter end of 1813. The disputes with the Burmese, regarding the invasion of Arracan, terminated only in 1817.

Lord Minto in his despatch to the Court of Directors of the 4th of March, 1812, adverting to the proceedings of the Mughls in 1811, terms it—“*a treacherous abuse of hospitality, in taking advantage of their protected situation to carry arms into the territory of a government at peace with our own, at the hazard of involving us in a war with the former, and exposing us to all the embarrassment and inconvenience which has actually resulted from the invasion of Arracan.*”

Lord Minto and the Government of Bengal seemed not only anxious to disavow any connection with the insurrectionary movements of the Mughls, but they had stationed troops on the frontier to prevent any more of them passing out of the Company's provinces with arms. This was consistent with the spirit of the resolutions of the House of Commons, as to the line of conduct to be pursued by the Indian Government towards their neighbours!

The following are extracts:—

“ Resolutions of the House of Commons of the 9th of April, 1792.

“ That every interference as a party in the domestic or national quarrels of the country powers, and all new engagements with them in offensive alliance, have been wisely and providently forbidden by the Company, in their commands to their administrators in India.

“ That every unnecessary or avoidable deviation from these well advised rules, should be followed with very severe reprobation and punishment, as an instance of wilful disobedience of orders, and as tending to disturb and destroy that state of tranquillity and peace with all their neighbours, the preservation of which has been recommended as the first principle of policy to the British Government in India.”

The policy of Lord Hastings, however, appears to have been the reverse of Lord Minto, totally at variance with the regulations of the House of Commons, and the law of nations. He permitted refugees from Assam year after year to obtain arms from the Company's territories, for the avowed purpose of waging war upon a province

of a state in close alliance with the British Government. Secondly, in opposition to the resolutions of the House of Commons, regardless of all the consequences, he is found affording a plentiful supply of arms and gunpowder to an ungrateful rebel, who had wantonly caused to be assassinated the prime minister of his government, merely because he was supposed to be much attached to the interests of the very power which had placed the rebel upon his throne.

! The rebel Rajah Chunder Kaunt after his defeat by the Burmese, in September, took refuge on the borders of the Company's province of Rungpore, and in December, 1821, he applied through the medium of the half-cast Bruce, who had fought against him under the Rajah Poorunder Singh and while doing so had been taken prisoner, for leave to transport gunpowder and stores into Assam for the declared purpose of attacking the Burmese authorities.

The application was forwarded to the Government of Calcutta by the political agent on that frontier, Mr. Scott, with an earnest recommendation that the request might be complied with. Lord Hastings appears to have required little pressing to enter into the views of the Assamese rebels, for in the despatch of the Government of Bengal to the Court of Directors, alluding to the transaction, they say :—

“ We informed Mr. Scott, in reply, that we had directed the sanction of Government to be conveyed to Mr. Bruce, for the transport of three hundred muskets, and ninety maunds of gunpowder, intended as a supply to Rajah Chunder Kaunt.”

The same despatch goes on to state :—

“ The necessary orders, we informed Mr. Scott, would be issued through the territorial department, to give effect to any pass he might *himself* hereafter grant ; and in case of application being made at the Presidency, the sanction of government would be given, as in the present instance.” *

This being clearly one of those *unjustifiable and improper* proceedings which the legislature in their enactment wisely and judiciously meant to prohibit, (a measure that can be duly appreciated at the present moment by the execration that has justly followed the conduct of the Spanish Government towards Portugal) it is fervently to be hoped, and expected, that some marked notice

* “ The solicitude which every one of just feelings must experience to prove his having adequately fulfilled an important trust, ought in my case to be increased by the peculiar nature of the office which I have held. The extent and multiplicity of its functions are little understood at home ; and still less are *those circumstances comprehended* which called upon me for exertions beyond the ordinary demands of my situation. If those *unusual* efforts were not necessary, they either risked *improvidently* the welfare of the Honourable Company, or they were *illicit aggressions on weak*, unoffending native princes.”—Lord Hastings’ *Summary of his Administration in India.*

may be taken of it during the present session. Indeed it ought, and no doubt will, excite the particular attention of Parliament; because in the sequel it will appear, that from these measures have subsequently sprung the most disastrous results.*

Towards the end of 1821, the cause of Rajah Chunder Kaunt became again temporarily triumphant: he defeated the Burmese in several skirmishes, and advanced into the interior of Assam. These successes, and the continued attempts of Poorunder Singh from the side of Bhootan and Bignee to recover their lost dominion, drew forth a letter from the Burmese General Menjee Maha Silwa to the address of the Governor-General, couched in a style of great arrogance, requesting that assistance should not be afforded to Rajah Chunder Kaunt by any persons residing within the British dominions; and suggested the expediency of his being surrendered, with all the other refugees, who might seek refuge or had taken shelter there.

* The whole of these events have not only been omitted to be noticed by Sir John Malcolm, in his Political History of India, but he goes further, and pronounces, "those reasonable grounds which the Burmese had for discontent had certainly *not increased* during the administration of Lord Hastings." How far Lord Hastings may feel obliged to Sir John, for not only passing over the facts recorded, but for such an unqualified assurance, it is difficult to say; but one thing is certain, the statement appears totally at variance with candour and truth.

In reply to this request the Burmese Chief was informed, "that it was *not the custom of the British Government* to deliver up persons who might take refuge in its territories on account of political disturbances."

But while the British Government were aiding and assisting the insurgent Assamese and the rebel Rajah, it appears pretty clear that their object was nothing short of that of instigating the different native princes under the Burmese yoke to revolt against their authority. Indeed, it seems to have been for a long time a favourite scheme in contemplation; but the time had not arrived when they could with safety to themselves, attempt to "*check the arrogance and presumption of that weak and contemptible state.*" The moment, however, was favourable to prosecute their designs; it was not to be lost. It has been seen the state of insurrection Assam was in in September, 1821. In November the Government of Bengal despatched an embassy to Siam, the most ancient, and at one time the most powerful of the Indo-Chinese states, situate on the eastern side of the Burman empire. The Burmese had been engaged in incessant wars with the Siamese. The object of the mission was avowedly for the purpose of opening "*a friendly intercourse for the purpose of trade* (the old cant) *between the two countries;*" but there is strong reasons to believe the *real object* was to form a collision

with the Siamese against the Burmese. But, whether or no, if such was the intention, the embassy failed, and was received with all the coolness and disrespect it merited—it was treated with contempt, and dismissed with indifference.

To return to the affairs of Assam. In May, 1822, the Burmese party in Assam received considerable reinforcements from Ava, commanded by an officer of high rank, from the court of Ammerapura, named Mengee Maha Bundoola.* Rajah Chunder Kaunt soon gave way before the new force, in June he sustained a decisive defeat, and disappeared altogether from the field. This event was followed by a representation on the part of the Burmese authorities, that Chunder Kaunt had rebelled against the sovereign of Ava, and it therefore behoved the British Government not to permit him to enter their territories; for if they did, they would be obliged to follow him; as they had positive orders from the Court of Ava to take him by force, even out of the Company's provinces. The Burmese officers who made the demand stated, that their army on the frontier consisted of eighteen thousand men; but that they had every wish to remain in friendship with the Company.

The Government of Bengal had now began to

* Killed at Denoobew.

perceive that the part which they had taken with the Assamese rebels was likely, if pursued in, to lead to consequences of a serious nature, that too at a period before they were ready to meet them. The government therefore sent instructions to the political agent, Mr. Scott, that should Rajah Chunder Kaunt, or any of his party appear within their territory, after his late defeat, that they should be disarmed and sent to a distance from the frontier.

In July, 1822, a Burmese Vakeel arrived in Calcutta from Assam with letters from the two Burmese chiefs to the Governor-General, requesting the surrender of Rajah Chunder Kaunt, and the Assamese refugees—complaining of the conduct of the British authorities on the frontier in sheltering of them. The letters, however, contained nothing offensive or objectionable.

In reply to the demand of the Burmese chiefs it appears, from the despatch of the Government of Bengal of the 22nd of September, 1823, that :

“ The Governor-General expressed his anxiety for preserving the peace and tranquillity of the British frontier adjoining Assam, and disclaimed explicitly all right and intention of interfering with the proceedings of his Burmese Majesty in the latter country. His lordship then, in general terms, declined violating the rights of hospitality, by delivering up the exiled princes and chiefs of Assam who had sought refuge within the Company’s dominions, but assured the Maha Silwa that they would not be permitted to abuse the kindness and hospitality of the British

Government, by making the asylum they had found within its territories a means of recruiting their strength to disturb the tranquility of any country which might have been annexed by conquest to the dominions of the King of Ava. Any attempt of that nature would be instantly repressed, and if persevered in, would be attended with the certain forfeiture to Chunder Kaunt and others of the British protection."

Was there ever recorded so glaring an inconsistency of conduct of any government? Is it not clear that the British Government were secretly endeavouring to undermine the Burmese authorities? Notwithstanding all the forbearance of the latter, and the professions of friendship on the part of the former, is it not evident that the British Government had lent themselves to measures they dared not openly avow, and which they were sensible no principal of justice or policy could qualify; and if persevered in, must involve them in the most serious consequence, and that therefore, were compelled to resort to the mean subterfuge recorded? But is it not vastly strange that these events of the government of Lord Hastings, in the years 1820, 21, and 22, were not reported to the Court of Directors, until such time as Lord Amherst did it *in Sept.* 1823?

In June and July, 1823, the Assamese emigrants residing on the British frontier were again engaged in collecting troops from all quarters, with the view to the re-conquest of Assam from the Burmese. The great wealth

possessed by many of the emigrants, enabled them to purchase with ease the connivance of the police officers—and frustrate the views of the British Government:—and indeed but for the exertions of the European officers commanding on the frontier, they would have set at defiance the orders of the government—on one occasion they paid the Subedar, commanding the post of Gowalpara, and the police officers, four or five thousand rupees : on an other instance they endeavoured to bribe the European officer with twenty-one thousand rupees, to permit them to continue, unmolested, recruiting men and sending them off to Bhootan.

The government at last determined to remove the emigrants from the frontier, and compel them to retire to a place in the interior of their provinces, so as to preclude the facility which their residence on the frontier had afforded them of prosecuting their designs upon Assam.

Here may be said to close the administration of the Marquis of Hastings ; and we come to the detail of the events which happened immediately on the assumption of the functions of office by his successor Lord Amherst.

It would be superfluous to point out to the reader that, which must be too obvious, namely—the critical situation in which the British Government in India then stood relative to the state of Ava, in consequence of the long protracted dis-

putes regarding the protection which had been afforded by the former to the refugees of every denomination—rebels, traitors, thieves, and assassins—from every province dependant upon the Burman Empire. The Government of India stood upon a mine ready every moment to explode, and the explosion of which threatened the most disastrous results:—they had laid the train, it only remained for the enemy to set fire to it and have blown them up. Yet, nevertheless, they were perfectly unprepared to meet the explosion, which they had repeatedly declared was “*unavoidable*” sooner or later. The moment was urgent and pressing; and required the talent, foresight, energy, and resolution of a great and comprehensive mind to meet it:—a man who would judge and act for himself, and not adopt the opinions of others—or those who had been a party, or instrumental in producing the then state affairs:—a feeble, imbecile, temporizing, undecisive, paliative character, would have lost for ever the British Empire in the East.

Lord Amherst had scarcely set his foot on the shores of Bengal before the Burmese were in motion. His lordship was an entire stranger to all the acts of his predecessors; he had consequently, besides other pressing and important duties to perform, immediately to make himself acquainted with the events of past years. This could only be done by perusing himself

the voluminous correspondencies of the government for past years, or by receiving and adopting the reports of others. The latter would not satisfy his lordship's mind ; he took the former. The result was, his lordship was convinced of the absolute necessity of acting more upon his own judgment, than under other circumstances he might have done.

It is almost impossible to imagine the arduous, difficult, and perplexing situation, in which Lord Amherst stood. For besides the important duties he had to perform as Governor-General, he had a most formidable opposition to contend against in the council chamber. This was produced by the *change of men*, in the change of Governor-Generals. Lord Hastings had generally left much to his council, or his favourites, who were men certainly not of the most brilliant talent. Lord Amherst not wishing to imitate the example of the noble Marquis, determined to judge for himself, and not by proxy. There were other causes too which tended to create difficulty and render his lordship unpopular.*

* “ By the latest account from Bengal, we have received papers and intelligence to the 1st of January. We are happy to have it in our power to assure our readers that Lord Amherst had quite recovered his health, and that his lordship had not the most distant thought of quitting India to return to England. There is thus a prospect that some of the evils which have hitherto formed the shame of the English administration in those

These were unfortunate circumstances to have happened at any time, but more particularly so

distant countries, will be removed, and some, if not all the most objectionable of the favourites of the former government, will be tried, dismissed, or at least, restrained in their mal-practices.

“ The press is already crying out against his lordship, and some of them in this country have begun to represent Lord Amherst’s administration as very unpopular amongst all classes, hated by the generality of the people, and praised only by the circle of the parasites which surround the palace. We believe the assertion to a certain extent, and with little variation. Lord Amherst has a very difficult task to perform, and an odious office. He has the Augean stables to clean ; innumerable abuses to reform, much to prevent and to rectify, and many high culprits to punish and restrain. This duty will at all times render a man unpopular amongst all those who either are themselves the immediate objects of the reform, or are connected with those who have fostered and propagated the evil. In every other part of the world these objectionable persons are comparatively few ; but in India, we are certain, they are unfortunately many. The abuses which have crept into every branch of the administration, are of long standing, and the system of favouritism introduced by the Marquess of Hastings was by no means calculated to remedy or restrain the evil. What wonder then that Lord Amherst should be unpopular with those who either feel the powerful hand of justice pressing on them, or fear to become the objects of the attention of Government ?

“ As to the gentlemen of his lordship’s suite, whom the discontented party call parasites, we challenge the whole of the radical press to mention the name of even one, to whom the opprobrious name can be applied, by any single act which has been *hitherto* performed by any one of Lord Amherst’s suite. They certainly by their *office* approach his lordship at all times, but they are no *favourites* ; they have *not yet* received any place of emolument to the exclusion of more deserving men ; they have *not yet* used

at that critical period; because they all tended not only to embarrass the mind of his lordship which required the utmost tranquility, but to impede the progress and welfare of the operations of the government.

We now come to consider the causes which led to the immediate prosecution of the Burmese war; namely, the events which took place on the south-east, or Chittagong frontier early in the year 1823.

The Burmese local authorities in Arracan had ever since the year 1821, been, it is said, contemplating a claim to the Island of Shuparee, situate at the entrance of the Nauf river.

their influence to screen a powerful culprit; they have *not yet* deceived the Governor with false reports against meritorious officers; they have *not yet* stifled enquiry into the conduct of any collector who happens to be connected to some of the Directors. *Hitherto* they have acted uprightly, honourably, honestly; they have *hitherto* confined their offices within the limits of their respective situations; and *as long* as they continue to conduct themselves as they have done *hitherto*, and *until* they commit any of the acts of *former favourites*, we do not see why they should be stigmatised with the name of their predecessors.

“Lord Amherst is a plain man. He detests vanity; he dislikes the fuss and pride which has been established by the Marquess of Hastings; and we are confident that it will not be long before he will become a general favourite, if his lordship will but continue steady in the conduct which he has hitherto pursued. Indeed the Indians will like him more and more, as soon as they become sensible of the difference.”—*The British and Indian Observer, of Sunday, May 9th, 1824.*

The Nauf river has been "*the admitted boundary of the two states*;" though from what period does not appear intelligible. At the extreme point of Teck Nauf lies the Island of Shuparee, a mere sand-bank at the mouth of the river Nauf, separated from the main land only by a shallow channel, which is continually filling up. The stream of the Nauf, upwards of two miles in breadth, flows between the island and the eastern, or Burmese bank of the river.

The Burmese contended that the island was theirs.—The British Government claimed it as belonging to them.—The Burmese trace their right to it to centuries back, when Chittagong, Dacca, Tipperah and Moorshedabad, were dependencies of the King of Arracan; and because they had subsequently conquered Arracan, by these means they were entitled to all the countries belonging to the ancient kings.* The Company claim it as

* "The native name of the country improperly called Ava, Dr. Buchanan says, is My-am-ma. The earliest notice we have of the country, occurs in the Travels of Marco Polo, who gives an account of a memorable battle that was fought in the year 1272, in the province of Vochang, or Yunshang, between the great Khan and the King of Mien and Bangala, in India. The losses in this battle, which lasted from the morning till noon, were severely felt on both sides; but the Tartars were finally victorious; a result that was materially attributed to the troops of the King of Mien and Bangala not wearing armour as the Tartars did, and to their elephants, especially those of the foremost line, being equally without the line of defence, which, by enabling

theirs, because the province of Chittagong belongs to them, and this island is more contiguous to their territory than it is to Arracan; again, because they had granted a lease of it in 1801.

them to sustain the first discharges of the enemy's arrows, would have allowed them to break his ranks, and throw him into disorder. From this period, the great Khan too always chose to employ elephants in his armies, which before that time he had not done. The consequences of this victory were, that his Majesty acquired possession of the whole of the territories of the King of Bangala and Mien, and annexed them to his dominions," (Travels of Marco Polo) by some writers, this title has been understood to imply two confederate sovereigns; but the context shows that only one person is intended, whom we may assume to be the sovereign of Ava and Arracan. This passage is important, as it proves a close connection, either by origin or conquest, between the people of the two countries. The Lord of Arracan long assumed the title of Sovereign of Bengal; and it appears that which-ever of the rivals of the Buddhist world lay claim to the supremacy, assumed the prerogative of including among his titular dominions all the other states."—*Modern Traveller*.

- The following passage from Vincent Leblanc's Travels (1660) throws no small light on the facts referred to:—"Verma (Birmah) hath formerly belonged unto the Kingdom of Bengal; the people are very civil and given to trade. Catigon, (Chittagong) belongs to the Kingdom of Bengal, which reaches over four hundred leagues of land, and the Lordship of Arracan, a Kingdom between Bengal and Pegu, stronger by sea than by land, and wages often war with Pegu, and some years since, they say, hath swallowed up Pegu, but ruined by neighbours, and therefore the King is called, King of Arracan, Tiporat, (Tipperrah) Chacomes (Cachar?) Bengal and Pegu."—*Asiatic Journal*, vol. xix. p. 650.

The right of the East India Company to this island, as it is called, is as clear as their title to any other part of their possessions. And the fact of its having remained undisputed until the year 1823, clearly demonstrates that even the Burmese themselves must have thought so. However, the latter authority questions their title to any of the ancient provinces of Arracan.

As far as my recollection goes, in the year 1811, so shallow was the channel between the island and the main land, that it might have been forded.—I used to bathe there—and this could only be done at the flood of the tide. It did occur to me at the moment that it had formerly belonged to, and formed a part of the main land, indeed I have no doubt of it, and that it has been separated by the strength of the current of the Nauf river, which is very powerful in the rains, sending forth vast columes of water descending in torrents from the mountains.

Early in January, 1823, as a Mugh boat laden with grain was passing near the Island of Shuparee, it was stopped by a party of Burmese armed with matchlocks, and the steersman shot dead on the spot.

The only reason which could be assigned for the inhuman and outrageous proceeding of the Burmese, was the hope entertained by them that such an act of violence would deter the Company's ryots, or farmers, from cultivating the island.

When the circumstance was reported to the magistrate of Chittagong, he immediately detached from Teck Nauf, to prevent any further outrage, a guard of twelve provincial sepoy to take post on the island.

About the same period large bodies of Burmese troops were assembling on the opposite bank of the Nauf—with an intention of seizing upon the island. To guard against which the magistrate of Chittagong increased the post of Teck Nauf to fifty sepoy.

Early in May, 1823, a formal demand was made by the Burmese local authorities in Arracan for the Company's sepoy to be withdrawn from the Island of Shuparee, as it belonged to the King of Ava, or otherwise it would produce a quarrel. In the mean time the Burmese were erecting several stockades within a day's journey of the Nauf.

Towards the latter end of May the magistrate of Chittagong received a second letter from the Burmese commander, demanding that the British sepoy should be withdrawn from the Island of Shuparee,—the stockade which they had erected pulled down, and the materials carried away, or otherwise there would be a great quarrel between the two states. The Island of Shuparee was theirs, and had been, with other parts of the province of Arracan in their possession for forty-six years, or the period since the conquest of Arracan.

The magistrate in reply stated, that the island had been from time immemorial in the possession of the Company, and by a drawing on paper of the position of it, he pointed out the impossibility of its being attached to the Burmese territory, the island being separated from the main land only by shallow water; whereas the principal channel of the Nauf flows between the island and the coast of Arracan. The magistrate further observed, that if any power should prefer a claim to the right of possession of any place held in possession by the English, the Government of India would, in a friendly manner, after due consideration, pass their orders in conformity to justice; but if any attempt was made to seize by force the island, it would immediately be repelled by the British Government, and the persons who attacked would be punished.

On the 8th of August, 1823, a Burmese Vakeel arrived at Chittagong and waited upon the magistrate with the following letter from the Governor of Arracan, Malia Mengee Kiojou, to the Governor-General:—

“ Our sovereign is extremely fortunate, he reigns the great Kingdom by inheritance from his grandfather, since his accession to Paradise; he is replete with religious principles, a strict observance of the ten commandments, and of the twenty-eight articles of virtue: to him has descended the throne of his grandfather, which he now fills.

“ There is a certain island, known by the name of Sheen-

mabu, where a stockade has been erected, and a guard of native sepoys stationed ; in order to their being removed I forwarded a letter on the subject to the Governor of Chittagong, by the hands of General Mungdoo, who brought an answer written on a sheet of paper, in the English, Arracanese, Persian, and Hindoo characters, declaring the said Island of Sheen-mabu to belong to the English ; I ask, therefore, if this communication is to be considered as an authorised one on the part of the Governor-General, if it be so, I assert that the Island of Sheen-mabu does not appertain to the Bengal Government ; from the time Arracan was subject to the original Arracanese Ruler, and since it came to the Golden possession, the island was always annexed to the Derhawaddy (Arracanese) territories, and still belongs to our sovereign. The guard stationed at that place, may be the occasion of disputes among the lower order of people, and of obstruction to the merchants and traders now carrying on commerce in the two great countries, and eventually cause a rupture of the friendship and harmony subsisting between the two mighty states ; to prevent such occurrences, it is requested that the guard now stationed at Sheen-mabu may be returned."

The boundary of the two states does not appear ever to have been definitely settled ; this was a pity, more than pity, a shameful neglect. Mr. Scott, the political agent and magistrate on the Rungpore frontier, in September, 1822, drew the attention of the government to the importance of doing so on the north-east frontier, and he further suggested the "*expediency of some regular agreement being entered into for the settlement of ALL EXISTING BOUNDARY DISPUTES.*" It is clear that Mr. Scott was alluding to the claim the Burmese are stated to have been contemplating to the

Island of Shuparee ever since the year 1821; and no doubt it was suggested to his mind in consequence of the outrage committed by the Burmese, by mistake, on the village of Habbraghat in September, 1821. It would therefore be proper to ascertain, if possible, what measures were pursued by the Bengal Government on this important suggestion; which, if adopted *in proper time*, would, at all events, have prevented the claim to the Island of Shuparee being made in such arrogant and threatening terms.

It would be well could it be ascertained, if at the conquest of Arracan Teck Nauf was inhabited, and under the authority of the Arracanese Rulers. One fact might be mentioned, in 1811 the inhabitants of Teck Nauf were exclusively Mughs. They were either natives of the soil, or refugees from Arracan; if the former, they must have been subjected to the Arracanese Rulers.

On the 15th of August, 1823, the Governor-General, Lord Amherst, replied to the demand of the Rajah of Arracan asserting the right of the Company to the island; adding, that "*he regretted that the first communication* which had passed between them since his arrival in India, should have any difference of sentiment between the principal authorities of two friendly states; but that he trusted that the arguments and explanations contained in his letter, would have the

effect of terminating the pending discussion. Should they, however, fail to produce conviction in his mind, it would afford the Governor-General much satisfaction to depute an officer of rank from Chittagong, to adjust finally all questions relating to boundary disputes on the south-east frontier of that district, in concert with a properly qualified and duly empowered agent from Arracan.

But these mild, pacific, and friendly overtures of Lord Amherst came too late ; the Government of India had broken their faith with the Burmese : they therefore credited nothing that government could advance. Suspicion, jealousy, hatred, and revenge, had taken too deep a root in the minds of the Burmese to listen any longer to the cant of friendly disposition:—consequently the adjustment of disputed boundaries, that might have been easily effected in 1822, if proposed by the then existing government, was rendered impracticable at the end of 1823 ; for at midnight on the 24th of September, a party of one thousand Burmese landed on the Island of Shuparee, attacked and routed the guard of Sepoys, killed three and wounding of four others.

By this circumstance it will be seen, and I think admitted, that if Lord Hastings had taken into consideration the plan I suggested of forming a battalion of Mughls, and stationing them at Teck Nauf, the outrage upon the Island of

Shuparee would not have taken place, or is it probable that the Burmese would have ever set up their monstrous claim; and to which they no doubt were actuated in a great measure by the defenceless state of the frontier, and the continual depredations the Mughls were committing.

From a letter which appears in Sir John Malcolm's "Political History," page 544, addressed in the year 1799, by Captain Cox while on the frontier registering the Mugh emigrants, it seems that he was so fully aware of the consequences likely to attend the allowing of the Mughls to colonize in the southern part of the district of Chittagong, as to induce him to state, "*it will be an eternal cause of jealousy to their former masters; and their predatory incursions may provoke an inextinguishable rupture with the Burman Government.*" How fully has not this been verified? But as the only possible chance of preventing it, he further remarked, "*assuredly every irregularity may be prevented by the establishing a proper post on the Nauf, and the vigilant administration of the persons who may be appointed to govern the district.*"

Were such observations and suggestions as these to be disregarded by any government who had any regard for their own quietude and safety, or anxiety to continue on terms of peace and friendship with their neighbours? This letter confirms the opinion I had expressed of the im-

portance of the post of Teck Nauf. If the government in 1799, had neglected the suggestions of Captain Cox, possibly doubting but that time might alienate the Mughls from the attractions their native country formerly possessed; surely in 1817, after the practical experience which they had had, they ought to have adopted some decisive measures of the kind. Had this been done, there is little doubt but we might have been at peace to this day with the Burmese, and instead of converting them into millions of enemies, as they now have been, they might have been formed into the most powerful, useful, and efficient allies on the whole of the continent of Asia* But there must have been some motive for the neglect, as well as for disregarding the suggestions of the magistrate to settle all disputes regarding boundaries; and upon which some light might be thrown by the supply of the three hundred stand of arms, and a ton of gun-powder to the rebels.

* Sir John Malcolm alluding to the shelter given to the Mugh emigrants says, "*the objections to the spot fixed upon were strongly stated; but the agent employed conceived they might be obviated, and his opinions were adopted by the Government.*" Sir John seems to be here again a little out in his statement, as the fact happens to be that Teck Nauf was never properly occupied, nor indeed were there ever any troops there until June, 1811; and those were immediately withdrawn. The weakness and folly in stationing fifty provincial sepoy, in 1823, could never have been contemplated upon by Captain Cox as a *proper* force for the post.

The Burmese, however, after taking possession instantly evacuated the island; and it was again occupied by some British troops.

Subsequent accounts appeared to leave no doubt but that the original object of the Burmese was exclusively confined to the seizure of the island: and as no immediate danger existed of an attack from them in any other quarter of our territories, Lord Amherst, still anxious to maintain the relations of amity and peace between the two states, wisely resolved to treat the affair as an act of the local authorities in Arracan, unauthorised by the Court of Ava.

A declaration, therefore, of the views and sentiments of the British Government regarding the outrage at Shuparee, and the course which it was then their earnest desire to pursue, pending a reference to the Court of Ava, which would allow the Burmese Government, an opportunity of disavowing and making reparation for the insult offered, was prepared and despatched to Rangoon by a ship, accompanied with a letter to the Viceroy of Pegu.

The Governor-General also addressed a letter to the Rajah of Arracan, expressive of his indignation at the conduct of the Burmese, and of the firm conviction he entertained that they had acted without the authority of the Court of Ava.

On the 29th of October, 1823, the Governor-General received the following letter from the

Rajah of Arracan; which for its insolence and arrogance deserves to be recorded :

“ Mur Maha Menger Krojou, Governor of Arracan, Minister and Commander-in-Chief ruling over Yeoka-poorā and one hundred and ninety-eight conquered provinces to the westward of the great Golden Empire, to the Governor of Bengal.

“ A stockade having been erected on the Island of Shein-ma-bu, belonging to Arracan, adverting to the friendship and commercial intercourse subsisting between the two great states, I sent Darem Yagea and Stossain Ally Singuist, with a letter to the Company's Governor, who pretends that Shein-ma-bu belongs to the English, on the proof of certain papers. The island was never under the authority of the Moors or the English; the stockade thereon has consequently been destroyed in pursuance of the commands of the great Lord of the Seas and Earth. If you want tranquility be quiet; but if you rebuild a stockade at Shein-ma-bu, I will cause to be taken by force of arms the cities of Dacca and Moorshedabad, which originally belonged to the great Arracan Rajah, whose Chokies and Pagodas were there.”

The Rajah also verbally informed the messenger despatched with the letter, that if the British Government attempted to retake the island, they would invade Bengal by Assam and Goolpara, and would enter Chittagong by the mountains from Goorjeeneea, up to Tipperah: adding that the King of Ava had armies ready for the invasion of the British dominions at every point; and that they had driven them from the Island of Shuparee by His Majesty's command.

As soon as the British troops had retaken possession of the Island of Shuparee the Rajah of Arracan addressed a letter to the commanding

officer at Chittagong, informing him that a continued occupation of the island would lead to a war between the two states.

On the 11th of November, 1823, the agent to the Governor-General on the north-eastern frontier, announced to the government that a large force had been despatched from the Burmese province of Assam for the conquest of Cachar; bordering upon the Company's province of Sylet.

As measures had lately been taken to form a connection of a tributary and protective nature between the British Government and that of Cachar, a letter was addressed to the commander of the Burmese troops requiring of him to desist from the project of invading Cachar, on the ground of the prior right of the British Government to interfere for the settlement and protection of that state; and its determination not to allow a country so circumstanced with respect to the British frontier to be over-run and occupied by the forces of a foreign power.

It would appear from history, * however, that the British Government could not have had a

* Caspoor is generally considered as the capital of Cachar, or Cosari, which is made to lie between Assam on the north, Tipperah and Sylet on the west, and Cassay on the east and south. In 1774, Oundaboo, the General of Shembuan (Birman) marched against the Rajah of Cachar, (Caspoor) whose country is described as to the N. W. of Munipore. "In his advance, he overcame Araup Sing, prince of a country called

prior right to interfere with the affairs of Cachar, as Cachar had been tributary for half a century to the Burmese Government. It was impossible, therefore, that any recent engagements the Government of Bengal might have been forming with the state of Cachar, could supercede *the priority of right* of the Burmese.

But measures which under other than the then existing circumstances, and at any other period, would have been considered as an unnecessary and “*avoidable interference in the nation quarrels of the country powers,*” must here be viewed in a different light. It was absolutely necessary, an indispensable interference; justifiable on the broad and solid basis of *self-preservation*. It was a precautionary measure of the utmost importance, and upon which, possibly, the fate of our oriental possessions depended. The Government of India had been threatened with invasion along the whole line of the north-

Muggeloo, and advanced within three days march of Caspoor. Here he was opposed by the confederate Rajahs of Caspoor and Gassain; and his troops being attacked by the hill fever, his army was dispersed and destroyed.” A second expedition was more successful, and the Cachar Rajah avoided the invasion, when the army had reached the pass of Inchamutty, by consenting to pay, besides a sum of money, an annual tribute of a maiden of the royal blood, and a tree with the roots bound in the native clay. Colonel Symes, in 1795, witnessed the arrival at Ammarapora of this degrading tribute.--*The Modern Traveller*.

eastern frontier; the cities and provinces of Moosshedabad, Dacca, Tipperah, and Chittagong had been declared should "*by force of arms be taken.*" The enemy were already in military occupation of Assam, situate on the confines of the north-eastern frontier province of Rungpore, and thus commanded the head of the Burhampootra river, which in its course passed through some of the most fertile parts of Bengal; and by which means the enemy might with ease, in the rains, have conveyed his troops to the places threatened with invasion. On the south-east frontier of Chittagong, again, large armies were collecting for the purpose of advancing from that quarter. The occupation of Cachar by the Burmese troops, was, therefore, upon no consideration to be permitted. Lord Amherst could have nothing to do with the misunderstandings and misdeeds of the former governments, or the causes which had led to the unhappy state of affairs. It no longer was a question, for the surrender of fugitives and rebels, but a far more important one—who should be the supreme sovereigns of India!

In January, 1824, the troops stationed on the Island of Shuparee being attacked with a peculiarly malignant fever, and the climate proving very unhealthy, it was impossible to occupy it any longer, and as the sepoys had remained in quiet possession for a period of upwards of two months, and there was no sign of any intention

on the part of the Burmese towards an attack, the detachment was withdrawn.

No sooner had the island been abandoned than the Burmese Rajahs began to assemble their forces, and the Rajah of Arracan announced to the magistrate of Chittagong, that he had received orders from the Court of Ava to dislodge the English at all hazards, and he declared his intention of attacking and expelling the detachment. The following is his letter.

“ We send four of our leaders to confer with the judge of Chittagong. The deep Shuparee belongs to our sovereign, and never did belong to the English ; nevertheless, they, listening to the suggestions of the Mughls, who are miscreants, have built a fort thereon. Our king is fortunate, King of the World, and Lord of the White Elephant. He has stores of arms, and he is just and righteous, and his ear is as of gold, and with it he has heard of the fort being on the deep, and has ordered it to be removed, and whatever Mughls or Bengalese are on it to be seized ; and to execute this order, we, the Rajahs of Arracan, are proceeding with innumerable armies, headed by captains and colonels.

“ The letter which the judge sent us by Noor Khan Jemmedar has reached us, and we have perused it, and perceive that he wishes a wurzeer (minister) of wisdom to be sent to him ; therefore we send four such persons with Hussein Ullee Doobashee. When the fort is removed from Shuparee, the intercourse between the two countries will be like gold and silver, and former friendship restored ; therefore we send these persons.”

Accordingly on the 15th of January, a conference took place, when the agents insisted on the

right of their sovereign to the Island of Shuparee, argued the folly of going to war about such a trifle, and declared that they would be satisfied if the island should be considered as neutral ground, and remained unoccupied by either party.

The British commissioner very properly judging that the re-establishment of the post on the island would invite an attack on the part of the Burmese, and lead to a rupture between the two states—an object of great importance to avoid at so advanced a period of the season—referred the question to the supreme government. The Government of Calcutta in reply stated, “that willing as they might have felt to have listened to any such a proposal, had it been brought forward by the Government of Ava itself at an earlier stage of the discussion, and previous to the assault on our post and the slaughter of our sepoys, the just indignation excited by that act of outrage, and the declarations and resolutions it had necessarily induced, must utterly preclude the compromise of the above nature, even if not preferred in the tone of insolent menace which the Rajah of Arracan had invariably assumed.” The Burmese were further informed of the British Government’s determination to keep possession of the island, and to inflict instant and signal chastisement on those who might disturb that possession.

About the 18th of January four ministers of rank arrived from the Court of Ava on the frontier of Arracan, for the purpose of enquiring into the real state of the disputes with the English, and to supercede the local authorities in Arracan. These ministers, with great pomp and display, crossed the Nauf river in four large boats, full of armed men, landed on the Island of Shuparee, of which they took formal possession by hoisting the royal standard of the Burman Empire; remained about an hour, burnt a hut, the only tangible thing on the island, and then withdrew.

About the same period the ministers sent an interpreter to the officers of the Company's troops on the frontier, as also to those of the vessels in the Nauf river, to request the favour of their visiting them in Arracan. With the former the insidious invitation had no effect; but the commanding officer of the Company's armed pilot schooner, the Sophia, accepted of the invitation, and accompanied by another officer proceeded on shore in a boat with eight lascars. They were immediately seized upon and carried off prisoners into the interior of Arracan.

This act of treachery and violence, it appears, was committed under the express orders of the Court of Ava. The occurrence created the greatest terror and alarm in the lower part of the district of Chittagong; from which the inhabitants fled with their cattle and property.

Letters of remonstrance were immediately addressed to the Rajah of Arracan, peremptorily calling upon him and the ministers from Ava, to deliver up the officers and men of the Sophia within a certain period ; at the same time stating, that as the treachery and violence complained of had been committed under the orders of the commissioners deputed from the Court of Ava, it must be considered as emanating from the King of Ava's authority, and unless instantly remedied the relations of peace between the two governments would be held to be dissolved, and war to have actually commenced.

Towards the latter end of January, 1824, the Burmese assembled in such great force on the borders of Arracan as to leave no doubt of the hostile designs of the Court of Ava. At the same time the Rajah of Arracan addressed a letter to the magistrate of Chittagong, avowing that the seizure of the two officers was by orders of the Court of Ava, and that he could not release them, but that they should be treated with kindness.

While affairs were in this state on the Chittagong frontier, notwithstanding the remonstrance which had been made to the Burmese authorities by the British resident on the north-east frontier, early in January, 1824, two armies, one from the dominions of Ava, the other from Assam, of considerable strength, advanced into Cachar,

for the purpose of restoring the government into the hands of one Govind Chunder, the Rajah of Cozalee, who had some time previously been deprived of his throne, and his country conquered by some of the natives of Cassay—another province of the Burman Empire.

Govind Chunder on his dethrönement had taken refuge in the Company's province of Sylet, but had subsequently gone over to Arracan to supplicate the interposition of the Burmese Monarch to assist in recovering him possession of his government. From Arracan he had proceeded, by orders of the court, to the capital Ammerapora. Having prostrated himself before the golden footed monarch Govind Chunder obtained the royal protection, and returned with the Burmese forces despatched by the King of Ava for the purpose of restoring him to his possessions.

On the advance of the Burmese towards Cachar the Governor-General's agent, Mr. Scott, addressed the Burmese authorities several letters informing them that though the British Government were disposed themselves to favour the restoration of Govind Chunder to the possessions of Cachar—but after the threats of the Burmese chiefs in Arracan, that upon the Island of Shuparee being again re-occupied by the British troops, the forces of the King of Ava should invade the Company's territory along the whole line of the eastern frontier; the Governor-Gene-

ral would not, under any circumstances, permit them to establish themselves in the Cachar country.

But notwithstanding the warning which had been given to the Burmese to desist from their project of interfering in the affairs of Cachar, early in January a large army were advancing on the side of Munnipore,* through the province of Jynteah, for the purpose. The above communication was made to the Governor-General's agent by the Rajah of Jynteah, who at the same time made an application, to be allowed himself to enter into a treaty of alliance with the British Government, and to be furnished with British troops to prevent the Burmese entering his territories, for which he proposed to pay.

Jynteah happened to be a province of Assam,† the Rajah of which availing himself of the distracted state of Assam for several years prior to the Burmese conquest, had neglected to make the usual offerings as a dependant state. The approach of the Burmese troops towards Cachar began to alarm the Rajah of Jynteah, because

* "Munnipore (the town of jewels), situated, according to the maps, in latitude $24^{\circ} 20''$ north, longitude $94^{\circ} 30''$ east, appears to stand on one of the heads of the Kiayn-duem river, in the midst of a district liable to inundation in the rainy season. It was captured by the Burmans in 1774."---*Modern Traveller*.

† "There most powerful Rajahs are those of Chyram, Sooloong, and Jynteah."---*Modern Traveller*.

he was aware that the court of Ava would not only demand, but enforce his submissive allegiance as a province of the Burman Empire tributary to Assam. The Rajah, therefore, cunningly applied to the British Government for assistance.

The Government of Fort William very properly "*authorised Mr. Scott in the event of either of the Burman parties evincing a determination to maintain their ground in Cachar, to take immediate measures for expelling them by force of arms.*"—On the 15th of January, 1824, the following letter was received from the Governor of Assam, in reply to the letters that had been addressed to him by the Governor-General's agent :—

"The Doobah Rajah and the Maha Rajah were formerly the Rajahs of Cassay, and were tributary to the Burmahs.—They afterwards rebelled, and fought against the King of Ava, who conquered and drove them out of Cassay : they then went into Cachar, and possessed themselves of the country.

"The Cachar Rajah (Govind Chunder) having been expelled his country, requested assistance from the King of Ava, and offered to become tributary.

"Matta Jocca (the Minister of Cachar) says he receives Sepoys from the Company, and that he is not afraid of us.

"If you deliver up the Maha Rajah, and Doobah Raj, we will not go into Cachar ; we do not want the country, but have got orders from the King of Ava to seize their persons : if they are in Cachar we will go into it and seize them ; if they take refuge in any other country, still we will follow and seize them ; if the English fight with us on this account, we cannot help it, nothing shall hinder us from apprehending them."

At the same with the foregoing the following letter was received :—

“ Seha Uragown, chief in command at Gwahatty, (a position the Burmese troops had taken up in Assam on the Burampooter) acquaints Captain Jaliat, the Cassay Maha Rajah, and Dumo Rajah, sent their sister, and a daughter to his Burman Majesty, ceded their country, and owned submission to that monarch.— Unmindful of their oaths of allegiance, and of the favours conferred on them by his majesty, they excited a rebellion, and made their escape to Cozalee, when, after a personal conference with the Rajah, they were allowed to stay, but did not remain quietly, for they soon stirred up an insurrection against the Rajah, and involved him in much trouble, and were at last obliged to quit the Rajah's country. These circumstances were represented by the chief Burman authorities to their sovereign, who, as the Rajah and Dumo Rajah had misbehaved themselves, by grossly violating their solemn oaths, commanded the Rajah and Dumo Rajah may be apprehended wherever they may be found, as they had occasioned serious disturbances in every country where they had been, and were very turbulent men. A military force was accordingly dispatched over land, via Munnipore, and we received orders to invite our troops for the purpose of seizing these men. On our setting out so to do, the Rajah and Dumo Rajah, with one Matta Jocca, combined together, and went off to the English officers with many offerings, which, on being presented, secured to them the friendship of government, as well as of the captain, and a paper was accordingly drawn up, declaring them allies of the English, as stated in your letter. We are not opposed to the Rajah of Cozalee, we are merely in pursuit of Maha Rajah and Dumo Rajah, whom we must apprehend, since they will not surrender themselves. Matta Jocca has applied to the English to assist him with troops. We are subjects of his Burman Majesty, and are not to be intimidated at your hindering us. You should not for the sake of ungrateful men and rebels cause a rupture between two

great states: these men ought not to be countenanced. Mention to them what is stated in this letter, give them good advice, and convince them of their misconduct, and keeping in view the great advantages resulting from the intercourse existing between the two great states; persuade them to come in and own submission to his Burman Majesty; to save his resentment, and let them again swear allegiance to their sovereign. If you can accomplish this, let us know by letter, and send it in charge of some person to Gwahatty, where our forces are assembled.—In order to pacify matters we will address the Burman Chiefs at Munnepoora on the subject.—We are on the frontiers of our several territories.—We have eyes and ears, and have the interest of our sovereigns at heart. As we have always been on terms of friendship, we should endeavour to promote it. I send this letter by a person to let you know every thing.”

From these communications it would appear that the British Government, as well as harbouring the Arracanese and Assamese rebels, had also been entertaining state delinquents from the Burmese province of Cassay. No wonder then at the formidable arrangements the Burmese were making, and advancing troops into that district, as well as on the Chittagong frontier.

Have not the Governments of India of preceding years, by these means incurred a vast and serious responsibility?—Are they not highly culpable for bringing about that state of affairs which rendered the war unavoidable?—Should not the odium, if odium there be in the war, be attached to those whose conduct produced it?—In the name of candour and justice, is it fair to cast censure on the individual who had suddenly,

and unexpectedly, been called upon to meet and encounter all the dangers and difficulties, in the producing of which he had no concern whatever?

It will be observed that the letter of the Governor of Assam contains a direct charge of corruption against the British officers on the Company's frontier. The Rajah says:—"The Cassay Rajah, with one Matta Jocca, combined together, and went off to the *English officers*, with many offerings, which on being presented, secured to them the friendship of the government as well as the captain."

This is certainly a very strong and important passage, which deserves particular attention.—By the friendship of the government, it must be understood to mean the *favour* of the *civil authority* on the frontier.—For such is the respect and awe with which these functionaries of the Company are held, that the natives consider (and sometimes very properly) that the conduct, or orders of the government, are regulated by them.

The letter of the Governor of Assam is dated in January, 1824. In page 124, there is mentioned a circumstance of the Subedar and police officers on the Rungpore frontier having been bribed by the Assamese refugees with four thousand rupees; also of the *attempt* to bribe the officer, Lieutenant Davidson with twenty-one thousand. This circumstance happened early in 1823—and the Government of Bengal, very properly, noticed it in

their despatch to the Court of Directors. But the circumstance of the “offerings” made to the English officers by the *Cassay Rajah* and *Matta Jocca*, are not in the least adverted to by the Government of Bengal; and we are left to cull our information from the official letter of the Governor of Assam; who does not appear at any time to have complained of the fact admitted by the government, of their native officers having received a bribe of four thousand rupees from the *Assamese* rebels. Possibly the Governor of Assam was not acquainted with the fact, or otherwise he would have learnt of the conscientious scruples of Lieutenant Davidson; and he might then have hesitated in making so round an assertion as he has done. But whether the charge be true or false, it has been made; it rests to be seen what steps the British Government took on the occasion, for they have made no mention of it in their despatches.

The earnest manner in which the cause of the rebel *Rajah Chunder Kaunt* was taken up by the political agent, had somewhat a singular appearance; but still there might be nothing in it but a mistaken feeling of philanthropy:—but there was something powerfully curious in the supply of the arms and gunpowder by the government to the rebel *Rajah*. Those who know India, or have witnessed any of the intrigues the natives are capable of setting on foot, and the channels through which they may be accom-

plished, and the governor, or government, at the same time be none the wiser, will be able to comprehend me. The Governor of Assam may have told a falsehood—he may himself have been deceived; but the thing is recorded, it is worthy of notice, because as the charge was made, it ought to have been investigated; if it had turned out to be true it would have illustrated, partly, the causes which had led to the perplexing dilemma in which the government had been placed—if false, it would have vindicated the British character, and demonstrated to a nicety the eagerness with which the Burmese authorities sought to brand it, as well as their perfect disregard to truth.

The letters from the Governor of Assam, and the commander of the Burmese forces at Gwahatty, were received at the British frontier post of Goalparah on the 15th of January, 1824. On the 16th the officer commanding the troops on the frontier hearing of a body of Burmese and Assamese troops having crossed into the plains of Cachar, at the foot of the Berteaker pass, and were stockading themselves at Bickrampore; also that a force to the eastward had been engaged with, and defeated the rebel Rajah Gumbier Sing's troops, and that a third division were crossing into Jynteah to attack them, marched into the Cachar country. Major Newton, the commanding officer, on the morning of

the 17th, fell in with a Burmese stockade, from which his men were fired upon. The stockade was instantly stormed in two places, and carried with a trifling loss on the part of the British troops; but one hundred and seventy-five of the Burmese were killed.

After the action at Bickrampore the Burmese advanced with a force of six thousand men to a place called Juttarpore, only five miles east of the Company's territories; as also to a place called Killa Kandy, with two thousand men, stockading themselves in these positions, evidently for the purpose of preparing for a serious eruption into the Company's territories. Major Newton therefore withdrew his troops to the Sylet frontier post of Budderpoore.

Subsequent to the attack upon the Burmese stockade, and towards the latter end of January, the Governor-General's agent received the following letter from the Governor of Assam :

“ An imperial mandate directed to me has been received, couched in the following terms :—Whereas Chounjeet and Marjeet by deceit and insolence have obtained possession of the country of Cachar, the patrimony of Rajah Goopee Chund, you are hereby commanded to conquer the said Raj, and restore it to the rightful owner.

“ In obedience to this order I, Maha Nund Kegooden, have arrived with an army, and intending to fight with and to conquer Chounjeet and Marjeet, I have met the English Company's troops, and fought with them. It will not be unknown to you, that before this, Kingberring, a son of one of the nobles of Ar-

racan, having disobeyed the orders of the emperor, was expelled from that country, and took refuge in the English Company's territories. On that occasion the chiefs of his Imperial Majesty and the functionaries of the Company had disputes, and quarrels ensued. Now, also on account of the Munnipore Rajah's receiving protection from the English Company the like occurrence has taken place, and a battle ensued. Besides that Boosyn and Eyassyn, and the Boora Gohayn and Chunder Kaunt, former Rajahs of Assam, one after another, have misbehaved and rebelled in the dominions of the King of Ava, and rebels have thus been suffered to occasion discord between the two states, until at length a battle has actually taken place. In reality, the above-mentioned chiefs justly apprehended our vengeance, being fit objects for punishment; but they have escaped, and without reason, a battle has taken place between the forces of the Company and those of the King of Ava. Now the armies of his majesty have arrived from Munnipore, and also from Assam, and I, Maha Nund Kegooden, will re-establish Rajah Goopee Chund in his lawful station. I have come with the most positive orders to effect this; and besides, by chance, there was a battle on the way. Never will I depart from the orders of his Majesty; but I will certainly restore Goopee Chund to his former dignity.

“ It will not be unknown to you, that between the functionaries of the Company and those of his Majesty there was peace; and that notwithstanding frequent disputes, never had an open breach of friendship taken place; but the merchants of the two countries continued all along to carry on trade as usual between the parts of the two states. Now that state of things is at an end, I shall not fail to do my best, and with the English Company war will ensue. The former Kings of Ava were always at peace with the Company, but that is now over, and the bonds of friendship are severed asunder. Formerly you wrote a letter as though there was friendship between the Rajah Goopee Chund and the English Company; it is therefore likely that their functionaries will not be disinclined to promote his benefit; and

it is therefore proper that, having confined the Munniporean chiefs, you will deliver them up to me. If you will not do this, I have the king's order to seize them in whatever country they may be found. According to that order I will act. The above is the truth, I have written it."

In reply to this haughty and insolent letter, and demand of the Governor of Assam, Mr. Scott reminded the Rajah that he had three times previously been warned that the country of Cachar was under the protection of the British Government—that while he regretted the occurrence of Bickrampore, the Burman chief must entirely attribute it to his own conduct in persevering in the encroachment after having been warned of the consequences. Mr. Scott then demanded the Burmese troops immediately to evacuate Cachar, or the British troops would not only advance into Cachar but into Assam.

The interpreter whom Mr. Scott had sent with his reply to the Rajah's letter returned on the 3rd of February, with the information that the Burmese commander had declared that he would give no answer to it until he had orders from the Court of Ammerapora; that they had treated him in the most outrageous manner, and threatened to cut off his head.

The commanding officer of the Company's armed pilot schooner, Mr. Chew, who had been carried of a prisoner into the interior of Arracan,

after having been held in close confinement for a month was relieved and permitted to return.

On the 17th of March, 1824, the Governor-General received the following letter from the viceroy of Pegu, being in reply to a letter addressed by Lord Amherst. It is not without its interest as an historical document :—

“ The letters brought by Webster’s ship were delivered, and on the petition being submitted to the ministers of the most fortunate King of White Elephants, Lord of the Seas and Earth, &c. &c., they observed, that the English protect the Arracanese rebels, who have violated their oaths of allegiance, as well as Jorajeit, Morajeit, the Cassayers, and natives of Eikabu, also Boora Counbay, Chunder Gunder Sing, and the Assamese people ; and that Chittagong, Ramoo, and Bengal, form part of the four great cities of Arracan ; but that as they were worldly matters, they are not worth notice, on account of the commercial intercourse carried on by sea-faring men.

“ Shein-Mabu is annexed to the four great cities, and because sepoy were stationed there, the Governor of Arracan requested, in the first instance, that they might be withdrawn, and afterwards caused them to be expelled by royal authority.

“ The Governor of Arracan has represented that three ships and three boats are stationed on the opposite side of the Nauf, and that a stockade has been erected on the island ; also that his messenger, on arriving at Chittagong, was confined there : if this be true, know, that the Governors on the Burman frontier have full authority to act, and that, until every thing is settled, a communication need not be made to the golden feet.

“ The Rajah and Generals of Arracan, Ramree, Chebuda, Mecca, Woody, Bassein, and the western sea coast, would, on hearing these occurrences, rise like giants ; for this and many other considerations, Mengee, Maha, Bendoola, has been ap-

pointed to regulate all the state affairs ; he is vested with full military powers, and on all important occasions he must be referred to via Arracan. This appointment has been communicated to all authorities.

“ The letter sent by the Governor-General states, that he has been newly appointed ; he can therefore, know nothing of the guilt of the Arracanese rebels, and he believes what they represent. Much rests with those in charge of chokies and such places : let him ascertain the truth, consider duly every thing, investigate and judge properly, and by petition, represent his case to the General via Arracan.”

Such was the existing situation of affairs with the Burmese when Lord Amherst declared war against the state of Ava. When reporting the unfortunate occurrence, his lordship concludes his letter to the Court of Directors by observing :

“ We have reflected deliberately and maturely on the insecure and exposed state of our whole eastern frontier, at the present critical juncture ; the evident policy, if not the urgent necessity of measures being at once adopted for expelling the Burmese from the threatening positions which they now occupy in Cachar and Assam, whilst the season yet admits of an effort being made ; the extinction of all hope of an amicable and honourable adjustment of our differences, by correspondence or negotiation with the haughty and barbarous Government of Ava ; and the discredit and manifold evils attending a protracted state of passiveness and inactivity on our part, whilst our adversaries are constantly offering fresh insults, and are gathering strength and courage, for some yet more daring attack on our possessions. The result of our deliberations has been a conviction, that whilst we are fully authorised in considering war as actually commenced, by the hostile and injurious proceedings of the Burmese Government, there is in reality no course left for us, compatible to our honour

and safety, but to issue immediate directions for prosecuting such a system, both of offensive and defensive arrangements, as is indispensable for the security of our eastern districts of Bengal."

Such are the events which led to the sanguinary contest with the Burmese power—such are the facts which the British Government of India have recorded against themselves—they are too strong to require further comment, or illustration of mine. I will not suppose it possible that any humane British bosom can require any suggestions from me, how they ought to feel when such *extraordinary* occurrences, for so I may surely call them, have passed under their observation.

It must be admitted that it is high time the English public should begin to open their eyes, and enquire a little into the state of those distant regions. The objectionable system still pursued in India and Leadenhall Street, shows the absolute necessity that Parliament should instantly take into consideration the affairs of the Company. The House of Commons formerly declared:—

"That the maintenance of an inviolable character for moderation, *good faith*, and scrupulous regard to treaty, ought to have been the simple grounds on which the British Government should have endeavoured to have established an influence superior to that of any other Europeans, over the minds of the native powers in India, and that the *danger and discredit* arising from the forfeiture of this pre-eminence, could not be *compensated* by the temporary success of any plan of violence or injustice."*

* Resolutions of the House of Commons, April 9th, 1782.

If such was the opinion of Parliament *prior* to the British having *established* “ an influence superior to that of other Europeans over the minds of the native powers in India,” how much more requisite must it now be when they have accomplished that *influence*, and extended their dominions to such a vast extent.

Unfortunately, however, neither the dictates of reason nor the authority of the legislature have been capable of checking the violation of faith, the desire of conquest and dominion, so repeatedly and so justly reprobated. It was the ambition of the Company which gave birth to the Board of Controul; but, unhappily for the honour of England, the welfare of India, and the vast interests of mankind, the power and authority of this board has been far too limited to ensure the object for which it was organised.

The truth of this may be seen every day, in the way in which all the affairs connected with our eastern empire are disposed of, first by the Directors, then by the Proprietors of Stock at large. This indeed is particularly observable in the manner in which they have got rid of the question, of the origin, and of the expediency of entering upon the Burmese war.

Far be it from me to call in question the propriety of the vote of thanks which has been passed to the noble Earl, and to the gallant soldiers who have so zealously and devotedly

exerted their powers, under the most trying circumstances and no ordinary kind of difficulties, to bring to an honourable conclusion the unfortunate struggle: on the contrary, I must cordially agree in the propriety and justness of every word and every sentiment that has been expressed regarding their exertions. Nay, I would even go farther, and say, that no honours or rewards can commensurate with the services they have performed for their country. Let the vote be recorded, and re-echoed from the mouth of every Englishman:

“ That the thanks of this Court (the Court of Proprietors of East India Stock, on the 13th of December, 1826,) be given to the Right Honourable Earl Amherst, Governor-General of India, for his active, strenuous, and persevering exertions in conducting to a successful issue, the late war with the Government of Ava, which was provoked by the unjust aggression of the enemy, prosecuted under circumstances of very unusual difficulty, and terminated so as to uphold the character of the Company, to maintain the British ascendancy in India, and to impress bordering states with a just notion of the national power of Great Britain.”

But whilst we pay the proper tribute due to the exertions of Lord Amherst, let us pause and reflect upon the abominable proceedings which produced that state of affairs, which may have provoked the enemy “ *to the unjust aggression:*”—and having so reflected, let us ask ourselves, how any war so provoked, or any success, the result of “ *violence and injustice,*” can be said to have

terminated to “*uphold the character of the Company?*” and whether they are not most disgraceful ways of maintaining “*the British ascendancy in India,*” and of impressing bordering states “*with a just notion of the national power of Great Britain?*”

The war—and its origin—are two distinct questions; though both of them have been disposed of together. The East India Directors have studiously avoided, for the best of reasons, entering into the merits of the *origin*: the Proprietors of Stock, like a flock of sheep, have followed their leaders. The Directors will exculpate themselves from the responsibility, on the score of having laid all the documents on the table at the East India House for the perusal of the Proprietors. The Proprietors will acquit themselves on the plea of confiding in their Directors, into whose hands the honour and interests of their empire had been placed; and again, the utter impracticability in the short space of fourteen days of reading a tenth part of the enormous thirteen folio foolscap volumes, to which they were referred for information. But this will not do for the British nation, or acquit them in the eyes of the world of a gross neglect of duty. It was the *duty* of the Directors, in the first place, to have made a report, and to have drawn the attention of the Proprietors to the *objectionable parts* of the proceedings of their Indian Governments;—it was next the *duty* of the Proprietors

to have taken them into *consideration*; and passed their resolutions accordingly. But none of this has been done. Now, does not this neglect, and the fact of their having consigned to oblivion the *extraordinary transactions* of preceding years—transactions that were so intimately connected with the war, prove the indispensable necessity of an immediate and total reform in the constitution of the East India Company?

I would ask, what would be thought of the House of Commons if the Ministers of England had for years been carrying on a ruinous war, without giving the Parliament, or the Country, the proper and satisfactory information of all the *events* which had led to it? if after this war, I say, had been raging for three years and it had just been brought to a conclusion, His Majesty, that is to say the Ministers, were to convoke a meeting of Parliament in the short space of fourteen days, informing the members that they were to assemble for the purpose of passing a vote of thanks for the commencement and termination of the war, and that they would find on the table of the House of Commons a multitude of papers, consisting of thirteen large folio foolscap volumes, from which the *particulars might be* collected upon which the resolutions were founded; and if those documents contained matter of a most objectionable nature, tending to implicate the Ministers in acts of violence, injustice, and

oppression,—I ask, what would be said, if but thirty Members of the House of Commons attended at the appointed day, and of the thirty, twenty-seven were known to be men who would vote for whatever the Ministers had done, or could possibly do—that but one of the members had perused the volumes, and that only two others wished for time to peruse them, and for further information before they gave their approbation:—if, I say, the Ministers by these means obtained a vote of thanks to his Majesty, and consequently an indemnification for their own conduct, which, subsequently turned out to have been more than objectionable; what would be the opinion of the nation?—Would it not instantly be said, there is no Parliament—the country has been abandoned to the Ministers, who have not only all the *patronage*, but all the power in their own hands, so as to make the country approve of *whatever* they might be doing. Now, what the country would do in such a case, they ought to do in the present:—petition the King to annul the powers of the Company, and be graciously pleased to call upon his Parliament to devise some new and better mode of administering the affairs of those distant provinces of his Empire.

The fact is, the Proprietors of India Stock have left every thing to their Directors; and the Directors have hitherto deceived Parliament, and cajoled the public to believe, that the executive

administration of the Indian Empire has been conducted by the servants of the Company with that *disinterestedness* which both the nation and the Parliament had a *right* to expect; while in fact, it has been the very reverse of what they represented.

Indeed the investigation of the causes which led to the Burmese war, to the shedding of such torrents of human blood, and the expenditure of twelve millions and upwards of pounds sterling;—the fate of upwards of one hundred millions of souls, who live under the controul of our laws, are topics which deserve the utmost attention of government. Those millions of people are our countrymen, our fellow subjects. The difference of creed, habits, manners, and language and the despotism of their ancient rulers are not reasons sufficiently strong to deter our government from seeing the laws properly administered, from correcting abuses, and putting a stop to that scandalous jobbing system which for years has existed in all the branches of the Indian Government.

It ought also to be remarked that the East India Directors have been for a long time endeavouring, and in many respects have succeeded in curtailing the interference of the crown, and increased the authority that has been entrusted to their hands; they want if they can, to have the whole controul of India under their own management.

It is therefore the bounden duty of Ministers, and of Parliament, to put a stop to those shameful proceedings which have disgraced the annals of India, and which sooner or later will, and must produce the worst of consequences. Decisive measures must be taken, and that at once, unless we wish to see India play the last act of the drama, the first scene of which happened in the United States, and of which the history of almost all colonies furnishes the episode.

It is well known how the affairs of the Company are conducted—we all know that the Directors, can at all times command a majority of votes amongst the Proprietors—it is well known that many of them have not an income to render them independant, and therefore liable to temptations—is well known that jobs and jobbing interest has accordingly prevailed for a long time, and there is no reason to suppose that it does not now prevail to a certain extent, in the disposal of places and appointments—and it is well known how and by what means even the Directors themselves have generally been appointed.

For these reasons it is to be hoped that the nation will see the propriety, nay, *absolute necessity* of adopting the *only measure* which can put a stop to them—and that is, by placing the administration of India under the controul of the crown; or, at least, that much of it that is

vested in the hands of the Directors, ought to be given to the Board of Controul.

We know we can depend on the wisdom of the Ministers; but heaven knows where we should go to, if we had no other support of our national honour and welfare, and the security of India, than the East India Directors.

Let us grow wise from experience, and if we cannot re-trace our steps, let us amend them for the future.

More than one half of this volume was actually printed when the melancholy news arrived of the death of the Marquis of Hastings. I lament it—the more so as at the present moment it would have been desirable to have heard his lordship's statement in reply to those facts affecting his administration—not that he could have denied one syllable that has been herein stated, but it is always desirable to have the defence of the accused: *alteram partem*, is very properly the maxim of our courts of law.

FINIS.

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<i>Page.</i>	<i>Line.</i>	<i>Errata.</i>
1	9	<i>for</i> —form grounds— <i>read</i> —form the grounds.
3	22	<i>for</i> —in which— <i>read</i> —on which.
6	7	<i>for</i> —Briman— <i>read</i> —Birman.
8	26	<i>for</i> —but soon— <i>read</i> —but they soon.
11	4	<i>for</i> —conveyed a threat— <i>read</i> —he conveyed a threat.
12	17	<i>for</i> —the extracts of despatches— <i>read</i> —these extracts.
13	8	<i>for</i> —with difficulty— <i>read</i> —though with difficulty.
16	3	<i>for</i> —were generally— <i>read</i> —and were so generally.
17	11	<i>for</i> —no— <i>read</i> —not.
30	18	<i>for</i> —but not so at the— <i>read</i> —although it failed at the.
30	18	<i>for</i> —for there— <i>read</i> —where.
59	11	<i>for</i> —and then— <i>read</i> —and he then.
60	6	<i>for</i> —which he had— <i>read</i> — and which had been.
71	8	<i>for</i> —the propriety— <i>read</i> —in the propriety.
101	3	<i>for</i> —did so— <i>read</i> —has done so.
102	13	<i>for</i> —opening— <i>read</i> —spring.
103	10	<i>for</i> —Musnud— <i>read</i> —Musnud.
104	7	<i>for</i> —Musnud— <i>read</i> —Musnud.
109	23	<i>for</i> —Negrois— <i>read</i> —Nagrais.
123	20	<i>for</i> —that therefore— <i>read</i> —they therefore.
124	29	<i>for</i> —in India— <i>read</i> —of India.
136	12	<i>for</i> —had broken— <i>read</i> —repeatedly had broken.
136	25	<i>for</i> —of four others— <i>read</i> —four others.
137	30	<i>for</i> —I had expressed— <i>read</i> —I had ventured to express.

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